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ABSTRACT

The 16 papers in this issue look at the needs of youth through the 1990s, describe ways librarians are meeting those needs, suggest additional services, and analyze the Mohonk Conference held in 1986 and its impact on libraries in the state of Youth in These Changing Times" (Jennifer Birckmeyer); (2) "Oh Boy, Here They Come! Library Service to Youth at Risk" (Anita Bassey); (3) "Mohonk!" (Mary A. Brown); (4) "Notes from a Messy Desk" (Lois Rigoulot); (5) "In Search of. . .Standards for Youth Services in the Pioneer Library System of New York State" (Linda Clark Benedict); (6) "Great Opportunities" (Suzanne Moore); (7) "Adolescent Illiteracy: What Libraries Can Do To Solve the Problem" (Judith A. Davidson); (8) "How To Get Teens To Read after They've Watched MTV!" (Diane Courtney); (9) "Federal Funds Fight Family Illiteracy: The Family Reading Program" (Carol Sheffer and Anne Simon); (10) "Registering New Children at the Library: The New York State 'Best Gift' Campaign" (Ristiina Wigg); (11) "Parent/Child Workshop: Meeting the Needs of Today's Changing Families" (Kathleen Deerr); (12) "'Welcome to the Public Library'--Serving Children in Day-Care" (Shirley Wyker); (13) "The New York State Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect: The Library Connection" (Sandra Feinberg); (14) "The Library Serves Homeless Children" (Christine Behrmann, Yolanda Bonitch, and Harriet Gottfried); (15) "The Decade of the Child" (Donna Miller and Alexandria Douglas); and (16) "How School Systems Came To Be and Where Are They Today?" (Joseph F. Shubert). (SD)

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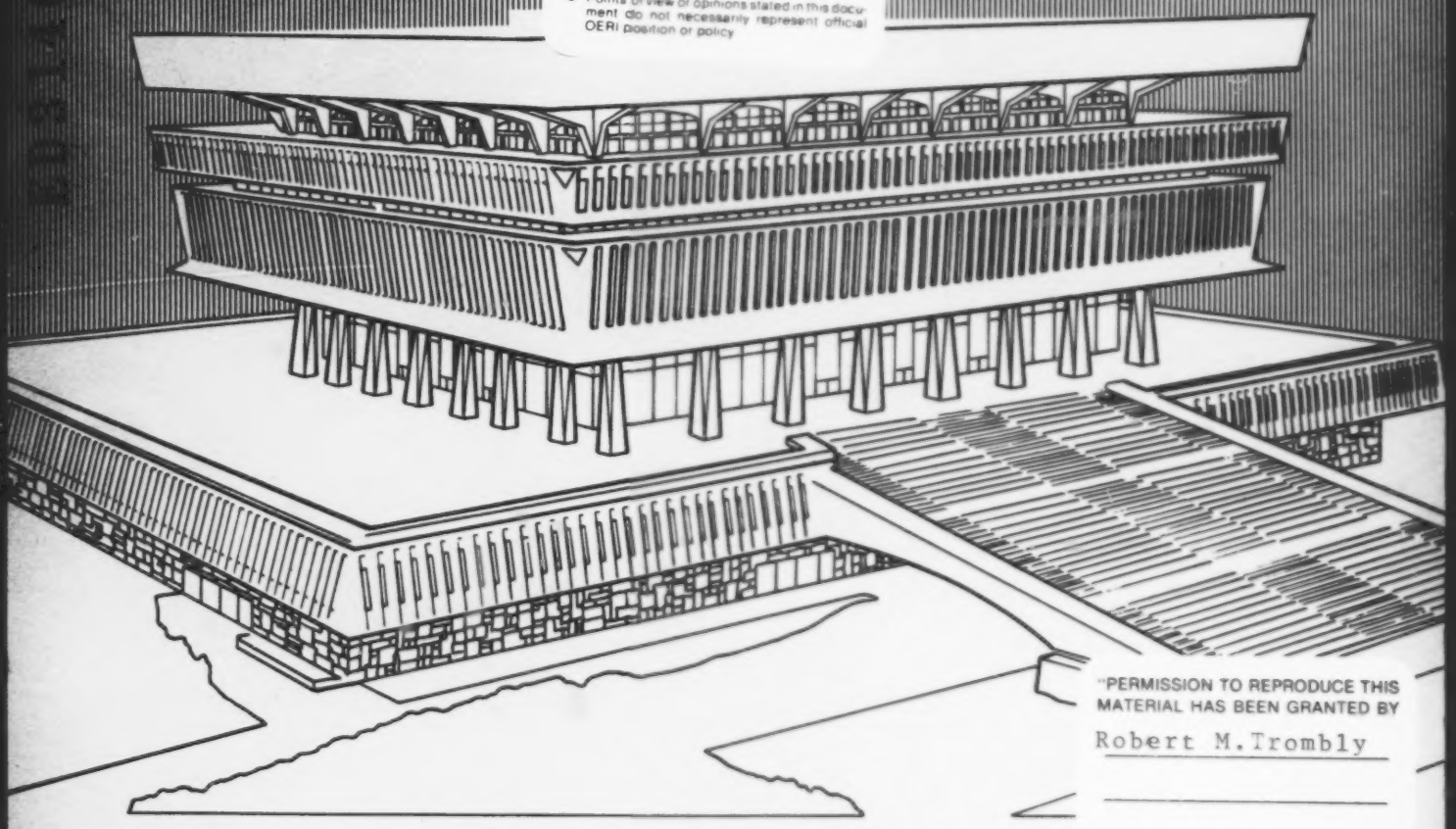

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Spring 1988

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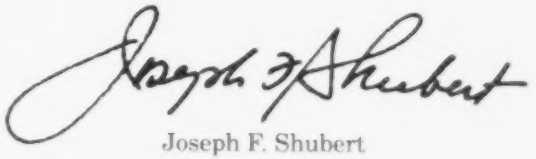
FOREWORD

We are indebted to hundreds of librarians serving children and young people throughout New York State for the services described in this issue of *The Bookmark*. And we are particularly indebted to Ristiina Wigg, Children's Services Consultant for the Mid-Hudson Library System and former President of the Youth Services Section of the New York Library Association, for designing and editing this issue.

In addition to the articles that Ms. Wigg has planned and assembled, this issue of *The Bookmark* includes "How School Library Systems Came to Be and Where are They Today?", the keynote address at the December 1987 School Library Systems Conference.



Joseph F. Shubert

INTRODUCTION
LIBRARIES SERVING YOUTH: ISSUES AND PROGRAMS IN NEW YORK STATE

"Libraries must help young people fill the need to know by providing the widest variety of information...."
(Conference Discussion Paper, Mohonk Conference)

During the 1986 Mohonk Conference, a cross section of New York's library leadership and youth services librarians discussed the strengths and weaknesses of library service to children and young people in the State and developed strategies for the future. In this issue of *The Bookmark*, we look at the needs of youth through the 1990s, describe ways librarians are meeting those needs, suggest additional services, and analyze the Mohonk Conference and its impact on libraries large and small.

Stock taking is especially appropriate now as programs are developed in the "Decade of the Child," proclaimed by Governor Cuomo to focus attention and funds on the needs of children and their families — particularly families at risk. Public libraries have always provided the opportunity for young people to gain culture and education regardless of race, economic status or academic standing. Funding, local and state, is important to enable libraries to continue to build effective collections of materials; to provide basic library service in communities too poor to pay; and to develop and continue the kind of outreach needed for children and families at risk.

Jennifer Birckmayer, Senior Extension Associate, Cornell University, combines a description of the developmental stages of children with a discussion of the importance of library services to young people and their families. Ms. Birckmayer emphasizes the essential need for "legislation that supports families and makes it possible to create caring communities...." Anita Bassey, former Assistant Coordinator of Programming, Brooklyn Public Library, establishes the importance of librarian attitudes in providing services that meet the needs of youth.

Mary Brown, chair of the Mohonk Conference, summarizes the goals of the conference and describes the programs that developed as a result of conference discussion. Lois Rigoulot, Director, Millbrook Library, reports on the impact of the conference on her library. After the conference, Linda Benedict surveyed services to young adults in the public libraries in the Pioneer Library System and developed a plan to meet the needs discovered. Suzi Moore, school librarian and former public librarian, reflects on the role of librarians in meeting the needs of children.

Current estimates are that one in five adults cannot read well. The problem of illiteracy in childhood and adolescence becomes the problem of adults who cannot function in the workplace and in the home. A national survey of programs for illiterate adolescents, conducted by the Center for Adolescent Studies, reported by Judith Davidson, suggests an important role for librarians. Diane Courtney, Westchester Library System, describes an LSCA-funded project that created public service videotapes to encourage teens to read. Carol Scheffer and Anne Simon describe a State LSCA invitational grant program that funded reading projects for families at risk, including illiterate parents. As part of the grant program, library systems were asked to use the American Library Association "Best Gift" campaign to invite families, especially families at risk, to register their children at the library. A summary article details ways in which large and small public libraries encouraged parents and children to get library cards and become library users.

Demographic trends indicate the need for library services that support families. In this highly mobile society, parents of young children are often far from their families and are unaware of services provided by their communities. With the increase in the number of young children whose parents work, more and more children in infant and school-age child care need library services provided to them through child-care agencies. Kathleen Deerr describes a parent-education play group, and in the following article, service to children in day-care is discussed by Shirley Wyker.

Children in crisis need the support of youth librarians working together with other professionals to provide library services. Sandra Feinberg, Assistant Director for Middle Country Public Library and member of the New York State Citizens Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect, discusses ways librarians have worked with other community agencies to provide information that can help prevent child abuse. Children's librarian Christine Behrman and others at The New York Public Library describe how the Library can serve homeless children. Donna Miller, New York State Council on Children and Families, and Alexandria Douglas, New York State Department of Social Services' *No Time to Lose!* program, report on other programs that librarians can join to publicize the plight of children.

Much is being done, but in a State where 32 percent of the public libraries are staffed by one person and the average expenditure for library materials per capita is $2.60, much more needs to be done. Young people deserve dedicated, well-trained librarians who can help them fill the need to know by providing the widest variety of information through comprehensive collections of books, films and videos. They also need librarians sensitive to the changing library needs of children and their families; and supportive legislation and funding on all levels of government. In the words of *A Nation at Risk:* "Excellence costs. But in the long run mediocrity costs far more."

Kathleen Wigg

DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF YOUTH IN THESE CHANGING TIMES

By Jennifer Birckmayer, Department of Human Development and, Family Studies, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY

The purpose of this article is twofold: first, to describe one approach to looking at the process of normal child development and to suggest implications of this approach for providing services to youth; and second, to consider the possible relevance of selected demographic trends in New York State to youth services.

The first of these tasks appears as the easier and more pleasant of the two. We are all on familiar, if sometimes forgotten, ground in discussing the provision of developmentally appropriate practices for youth, and we can certainly take pride in the progress we have made in this area over the past several decades. I found a striking reminder of just how far we've come the other day when I unearthed one of the "Little Slovenly Peter" series. Titled "Little Suck-a-Thumb," the story is the dreadful account of a small boy left alone by his mother, who reminds him not to suck his thumb while she's away.

> Mama had scarcely turned her back
> The thumb was in, Alack! Alack!
> The door flew open, in he ran
> The great long-legged scissor man.

The boy's thumbs are indeed cut off and Mama takes a very "Told-you-so" attitude when she returns home. Even those of us who may take Freudian theory lightly might agree that a story like this is not only developmentally inappropriate, but may be both terrifying and damaging to a young child.

On the positive side, what can be described as "developmentally appropriate"? Like many other teenagers in the 1940s, I remember the exquisite relief I experienced when an astute librarian introduced me to Maureen Daly's *Seventeenth Summer*. Here at last was a book about someone whose background and experiences might be different, but whose unspoken questions and anxieties were very similar to mine. It was a book that provided reassurance and comfort, while at the same time gently stretching my imagination. This kind of experience, which combines two kinds of messages, 1) "You're okay," and 2) "Here's something new to think about," can happen, of course, in many ways. It brings to mind Hodding Carter's comment that there are only two gifts we can give our children: one is the gift of roots and the other is the gift of wings.

NORMAL CHILD DEVELOPMENT

"The concept of developmental tasks...provides a useful structure for looking at the process of human development."

According to Erikson, a task consists of resolving in a favorable direction the conflicting impulses that characterize each stage. The first of these tasks is the establishment of a sense of trust outweighing a sense of mistrust. In the first year or so of life, each infant needs to feel that the world is a trustworthy place and that he/she is a trustworthy person. This sense of trust grows out of experiences with primary caregivers and other significant people. Being fed when hungry, feeling warm and dry, being comforted when distressed, being handled with loving care all contribute to the infant's ability to develop a sense of trust. Care that is haphazard, sporadic, overly routinized or in other ways nonresponsive to the infant's individual temperament creates a sense of mistrust. Of course, we all continue to need experiences that contribute to our feelings that the world is a place in which we can be comfortable and trust ourselves, but the most critical period for the development of basic trust occurs during infancy.

"Parents need help...."

As more and more is learned about the needs and competencies of babies, it becomes increasingly clear that the old saying, "Anyone born to wear a skirt can care for a baby," is not only sexist, but totally untrue. Parents need help in developing the responsive care practices that are most appropriate for their infants, and as increasing numbers of parents of very young children return to work, the need for training to promote high quality infant care is a critical community need.

Programs, materials, speakers, resource and referral systems, support groups, parenting and caregiving books are some kinds of desperately needed service, but equally necessary are outreach services to parents of babies at work, and to family- and center-based infant care programs. Lunchtime seminars, films and discussions at the work site, programs in family day-care homes and at child care centers, kits of learning materials, and opportunities to network with others who share concerns and questions about babies are some of the badly needed resources if we are to raise well-adjusted babies.

SECOND DEVELOPMENTAL TASK

The major task of children in the second and third years of life is that of developing a sense of autonomy outweighing a sense of shame and doubt. Adults who care for toddlers must be sensitive to their great need to assert themselves. "Me do it," "mine," and "no" are three words often used by toddlers but sometimes viewed by adults as evidence that they are "terrible twos" instead of normal children developing what T. Berry Brazelton has called "personhood." Feeling autonomous is far superior to feeling helpless and doubtful as one faces life, although the process of fostering autonomy in a young child can be a formidable challenge to adults.

"...books for toddlers seem to be less scrupulously inspected for racism or sexism than books for older children...."

Here again the need for parenting information and for resources and material that generate high quality child care programs is critical. But this is also the age at which children begin to use and enjoy the library. To my surprise, books for toddlers seem to be less scrupulously inspected for racism or sexism than books for older children, and yet attitudes are forming in even these tiniest of book lovers. Programs for toddlers, if they are to be developmentally appropriate, should be planned for very small groups, should encourage adult companions to participate with the child, should be brief, and be extremely flexible! Some toddlers may participate by watching, while many persist in doing their own thing; both styles are acceptable in a developmentally appropriate program.

As a parent educator it is my experience that parents and caregivers need a great deal of help in arranging developmentally appropriate experiences for toddlers. For example, adults often remember with great pleasure the fairy tales they loved as children. Forgetting that they were probably considerably older when they most enjoyed them, they become eager to introduce this kind of literature to children at an inappropriately early age. It was Lucy Sprague Mitchell who first made the point that "here and now" books should be used with very young children and that most of the "once upon a time and far away" books can be saved for children who have learned to distinguish between reality and fantasy. As Dorothy Butler writes, "Children between the ages of eighteen months and three years are becoming increasingly conscious of the world about them, and appreciate accurate representation of that world. But this must take place through the agency of known objects and backgrounds if identification is to be complete . . . and this is the second requirement of books for the very young: a use of words that have precision and yet explore the resources of language, deftly and eloquently setting the scene and moving the action along."

"...meeting someone 'just like me!' in the pages of a book is a heady experience indeed."

Parents and child care providers need help in choosing the simple, reality-based books that seem to produce in the very young that "shock of recognition" that is, at any age, one of the characteristics of a really satisfying book. For most adults a story like Lois Lenski's *Davy's Day* — "Davy wakes up early. He brushes his teeth and washes his face. He eats his breakfast." — is incredibly boring, but to a young child the joy of meeting someone "just like me!" in the pages of a book is a heady experience indeed. These very simple stories that build gently on everyday objects, events and familiar kinds of people may be, for our youngest children, the books that provide "roots" — those feelings of trust that the world is a predictable place peopled with characters who can be counted on to behave in familiar ways, although occasionally revealing daring and absurd possibilities, such as a bear who puts his pants on his head!

These are familiar ideas to librarians and people trained in child development, but they are often new and strange concepts to parents and child care providers who insist that children like exotic and fantastic tales, and that these are the stuff imagination

feeds upon. My reply is to say that children might like chocolate cake for breakfast, but a little goes a long way and that there is a vast treasure house of books for the very young that I don't want to miss. I add that many of these books provide the kind of milk and cereal intellectual nourishment that is healthy for toddlers. Children need to feel rooted in a book world inhabited by people who share the experiences they have and who establish with them a sense of kinship, connectedness, and relevance, if they are to enjoy fantasy to the fullest extent possible.

THIRD DEVELOPMENTAL TASK

"...books...reflect any of the unconscious struggles experienced by children themselves."

For most normally developing children, Erikson suggests that the third developmental task — that of developing a sense of initiative versus a sense of guilt — occurs around the ages of three, four, and five. During this stage, children are more actively exploring and investigating, they are asking questions and trying out new ideas — and each child is also developing a sense of being responsible for actions as an autonomous person. It is easy for a four-year-old to feel too guilty for a minor transgression. Adults must struggle to provide experiences for young children that enable them to have confidence in their own ability to forge ahead and experiment and to try out new ideas without being overwhelmed by fears of failure.

No wonder "The Little Engine That Could," "Curious George," and "Frog and Toad" have been such longstanding favorites with preschoolers, for books like these reflect many of the unconscious struggles experienced by children themselves. Sensitive adults will be able to see the manifestations of an emerging sense of initiative in young children and may feel that it is appropriate to introduce some of the classic myths, legends, and fairy tales that form an important part of our cultural heritage. My feeling is that we should still do this more cautiously than is our usual practice. The barrage of information, misinformation, and fantasy most children receive from the media (especially television) underscores their needs for beautifully written and illustrated picture books that continue to help them establish roots while gaining confidence in their own creative ideas. Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* has been a powerfully attractive book for many children — who have been wonderfully reassured to hear the homey detail that Max's supper was "still hot!"

FOURTH TASK

Erikson describes the task of the school-age child as that of establishing a sense of industry over a sense of inferiority. As young children move away from home and into the world of school, they become increasingly interested in rules, in questions of right and wrong, and in figuring out how things work, how well they fit in with peers, and how adequately they can meet the challenges presented at school. Mentally healthy children of this age have a firmly established sense of basic trust, a good feeling of personal autonomy and confidence in their own initiative. They are eager for new experiences, adventures, and ideas, although they continue to "touch base" with parents, family, and often with activities and books adults might expect them to have outgrown. Pure fantasy delights them and the "uses of enchantment" described by Bruno Bettleheim are certainly in evidence with this age group.

THE VALUE OF A LIBRARY

According to many parents, symptoms of adolescence are appearing at increasingly early ages — by 10 or 11, many children appear to be engaged in what Erikson describes as the task of establishing identity. Who am I? What am I? What can I do? What rules govern my behavior? How much control do I have over my own behavior? These are all questions reflected over and over again as adolescents struggle to cope with serious social problems. Adolescent pregnancy, substance abuse, depression, suicide, illiteracy, unemployment, and homelessness reflect societal conditions that affect us all, although adolescents may be at highest risk for tragic consequences. Rap groups, information sessions, job training and referral, information about community services, as well as up-to-date reference materials at a variety of literacy levels will be of increasing value to teens. Books about people like themselves who cope with human problems are a recent addition to the field of young adult literature. Their popularity attests to their usefulness. The value of the library as a place to play, to meet with friends and recreate — to find books that provide "wings" to enchantment — cannot be overstated.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SERVING YOUTH

Many school-age and adolescent young people are so-called "latch-key" kids. In 1986 the New York State Commission on Child Care reported that there were 690,000 6- to 12-year-olds whose parents were at

work and, therefore, not at home after school. Of these children 152,700 live in families with an annual income of less than $15,000. Statewide, outside New York City, there were only 1,400 day-care slots that were publicly subsidized for this age group. So, as many librarians know so well, many children go each day to the library. Some librarians respond by restricting use by children. Others take the position expressed by Larry Brandwein, director of the Brooklyn Pubic Library: ". . .special after-school programs have always been an important part of the library . . . the concerns . . . expressed (in *The New York Times*) are very real ones . . . However, in addressing them, we must not lose sight of the fact that children must always know that they are welcome in the library." As a very interested bystander, my strong reaction is to suggest that libraries, child care councils, child care programs, schools, churches, parent groups, and interested community agencies and individuals will only solve this dilemma by coming together in a spirit of cooperation and with an action-oriented agenda.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

To this point, I have tried to describe a framework for normal child development and to suggest implications for libraries of recent trends such as (1) the return to work of parents with young children with a corresponding increase in the need for alternative infant and school-age child care, (2) the increase in children's television watching, underscoring the increasing importance of developmentally appropriate books, and 3) the mounting number of social issues confronting teenagers. Other trends that will affect us all include:

1) In 1980, one in four of every New York State resident was Hispanic or nonwhite. By 2000, one in three of every NYS resident will be Hispanic or nonwhite. Increasing numbers of persons of color will live in the suburbs of major cities.

   Implications:

   a) need for multicultural and multilingual education for librarians and *all* New York State residents;

   b) need for multicultural materials to educate all New York State residents about their neighbors;

   c) need for programs of instruction in English-as-a-Second-Language (In 1984, 17 percent of youth aged 5 to 17 came from families in which English was not the primary language.); and

   d) need for programs that enable youth to broaden their understanding of USA as a multicultural, multilingual country.

2) As of December 1984, there were 267,470 students enrolled in Special Education classes in New York State. Of these students, 49 percent were learning disabled. As more infants survive potentially catastrophic conditions at birth and more children with severe handicapping conditions are mainstreamed into community life, community institutions (such as libraries) must respond with:

   a) physically accessible facilities;

   b) interpreters for sight or hearing-impaired persons (for example, signed story hours, captioned film programs, instruction in the use of sign language and Braille); and

   c) material that increases understanding about the universality of human needs while simultaneously offering information about handicapping conditions.

3) Changes in family composition
   Sixty percent of today's youth will live with only one parent for some time before they are 18 years old. *Shattered Lives*, a report by Statewide Advocacy (1986) indicated that in the early 1980s there were 666,000 single parents in New York State; 90 percent of single-parent households were headed by women; 57 percent of these female-headed households were poor. Many single women with children marry — sometimes they marry men who also have children.

   Implication:

   a) Life as a single parent often carries with it dual burdens of responsibility and poverty. Libraries can offer parent support groups, parenting and job information, and education about advocacy. Single parents may not be able to visit the library as often as they might wish, but there is no evidence that they are less effective or less concerned as parents. Meeting their needs for support and information will be a special challenge for libraries.

   b) Library collections must reflect the increasing variety of family composition, beginning with books and materials for the very youngest.

4) Currently, approximately one in every five American families move each year.

   Implications:

   a) Libraries can provide continuity of experience for children. ("Look! *Mike Mulligan* lives here too!" shouts one four-year-old upon coming into the library in a new locality.)

   b) Libraries can encourage people who share common interests to get together.

   c) Libraries can help families new to the area find out what's going on in their community.

"...legislation that supports families and makes it possible to create caring communities is essential."

There are many, many other trends of importance to all of us if we are to respond wisely to the needs of youth. It goes without saying — but continues to be necessary to say — that legislation that supports families and makes it possible to create caring communities is essential. Informed, articulate coalitions of voters depend on accurate sources of information, resource materials, and guidelines that will enable them to make themselves heard politically.

RELEVANCE TO YOUTH SERVICES

Regardless of changing times, as Urie Bronfenbrenner has said, children learn to be human in families, and families continue to be the most humane, powerful, and economical environment for rearing the young. Bronfenbrenner goes on to say that "what every kid needs most is someone who is just plain crazy about him," and that, in order to maintain such a relationship of "irrational attachment," parents and primary caregivers will need the support of third party individuals and institutions.

"Youth must know that they are necessary and valued members of their communities."

The developmental needs of young people can be met only in the context of strong interpersonal relationships. As the information explosion increases and technology becomes more sophisticated, the needs of young people for relationships with adults who can help them make sense of a rapidly changing world become more urgent. Youth must know that they are necessary and valued members of their communities. Serving as tutors, mentors, and companions to those who are older or younger than they are, learning to depend on others for help and nurturance as well as having opportunities to be helpful and caring, are important experiences in developing healthy, happy human beings.

There are two potential sources of people power for expanding library services if population trends in New York State continue in their current directions. One will be from the ranks of high school dropouts and from adolescents in desperate need of meaningful work — either paid or as interns, part-time or full-time. The second is from the ever-increasing numbers of people over the age of 65, who on the average will be better educated and in better health than previous generations of the elderly. Intergenerational programs are emerging as the logical way to go. What better place for them to happen than in a library?

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OH BOY, HERE THEY COME! LIBRARY SERVICE TO YOUTH AT RISK

By Anita Bassey, Assistant Coordinator, Programming Services Office, Brooklyn Public Library

It's three o'clock. Where are New York State's 5.2 million children on a weekday after school? If I had my way, they'd all be in a library. Where else can they find bears like Paddington, mountains like Everest, musicians like Raffi, or puppets like Pinocchio all at once? What other place is dedicated to helping young people make the connection between books and things worth knowing?

READING

We're all aware that reading is necessary in a developed society like ours. We know that children have to start early to learn to read so they'll be proficient when they're adults. They'll have to read maps, and instruction manuals, and medicine bottles, and motor oil cans, and application forms. We send them to school to learn it, and their teachers drill them in it. They get readers and workbooks and tests and perhaps their teachers will read to them from a "real" book. Then they go home and do their homework, and if they're really fortunate their parents will read to them, too.

But what about wanting to read for themselves? Do they? Maybe yes, but all too frequently, no. It's quite a bit of work, you know, and it's not easy. Some people never get the hang of it. That's where libraries come in. That's where you're likely to find the trained children's librarian, and when the children are older, the trained teen services librarian, ready, willing and anxious to match up youth and youthful interest, to show them the point of it all.

"...we tend to serve those we find easiest."

Sure, I know, you can learn lots from TV. You can learn about termite mounds in the desert, and see what the latest model car looks like. It's fun, and you don't have to work so hard for it. But are you learning how to think? Thinking is desirable in a democratic society, where we're supposed to govern ourselves. The idea is for everyone to consider the issues at hand so we can make the intelligent decisions about how the country should be run. If you haven't learned how to think, if you can't remember and structure your thoughts, then you can't control your reasoning. If you can't do that, you can't fulfill your societal obligation. TV can't help you with the thinking process because watching it is a passive activity, and it gives the viewer little time to think about what's happening on the screen. Books, however, can help. Written language and the ability to interpret it are said to be essential to the development of rational thought. The richness of language found in good books is believed to have a direct bearing on the development of the thinking process.

So, o.k.; libraries, and the books they contain, are important to all children. I don't have to preach to you; you're convinced already. Why am I even bringing it up? Because all of those 5.2 million children are never going to make it into the library. Some of them are going to be excluded for one reason or another. And because of that, some of them will not learn to think as well as they might have and won't have as bright a future as they could have had.

WHO IS AT RISK? — ALL CHILDREN

This article is subtitled "Library service to youth at risk." Who is at risk? Actually, *all* children are. Our society doesn't think much of its young, although we pay them lip service. The connection between them and society's own future is not often made in places of power. As a result, services designed for the young, even those that we know work well, are chronically underfunded.

- WIC, the food program for women with infants and children, can serve annually less than half of those eligible for it nationally.
- Chapter 1 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act serves about half of those eligible for it.
- Head Start, aimed at low-income preschoolers and their families, can serve only 19 percent of eligible children.

With these facts in mind and the fact that libraries themselves are frequently considered something of a "frill" (i.e., one of the first items to be reduced in a budget crunch), it is not at all surprising that we can't serve all of our youth. Being human and taking

the line of least resistance, we tend to serve those we find easiest. Those more difficult, and consequently most likely to be left out, are youngsters who:

Are preschoolers

New York State estimated that 1,431,427 of its children were five years old or younger in 1986. (All statistics cited here are the latest available to me at this time.)

Are poor

In 1985 about one in every four children in the State lived in poverty.

Have working parents

In 1980, 27 percent of children under six in New York State needed child care. Of children between six and 13, 23 percent needed it before or after school. In 1985, only 16 percent of children needing child care actually got it.

Are black or Hispanic

In 1980, 16 percent of New York State's children were black and 12 percent Hispanic. A smaller percentage were foreign-born, representing 90 different countries.

Have limited proficiency in English

129,985 children in the State attended classes for those with limited proficiency in English (LEP) in 1985-86.

Are gifted

In 1984, 106,590 public school students in the State, or 4 percent of the population, were enrolled in gifted programs.

Have a hearing, speech or visual disability

In 1985, roughly 35,555 of New York State's children had either impaired or nonfunctional hearing, speech or vision.

Have a learning disability

In 1985, 150,553 of the State's children were learning disabled.

Are emotionally disabled

This category accounted for roughly 38,237 children in the State in 1985.

Have dropped out of school

About one-third of the students who entered high school in New York State in 1981 failed to graduate in 1985.

Are teen parents

In New York State in 1985, 25,973 children were born to females aged 15-19.

Live in institutions or foster care

In 1985, 38,000 children in the State resided in out-of-home care facilities.

Are from single-parent families

The percentage of single-parent families in the State is expected to reach 24 by the year 2000.

Have illiterate parents

An estimated 23 percent of New York's adults are functionally illiterate, and many more only marginally literate.

Are illiterate themselves

Functional illiteracy among 17-year-olds in the State is estimated at about 17 percent overall, and about 40 percent for youth from minority groups.

That's quite a bit of deck stacking. In each of these categories are large numbers of young people who are disadvantaged in more than one way. They are less likely than the rest of society to have access to the information, wide cultural horizons, exposure to books and reading, stimulation of the imagination and experience with language provided by early and constant library use.

WHAT CAN CHILDREN DO?

What can these children themselves do about the fact that they're most likely to be left out of the mainstream of library services? Precious little, even assuming they realize the value of these services on their own. It would be wonderful if children all, individually, arrived at an understanding that society on the whole doesn't want to deal with them, and were emotionally strong enough to fight for their rights. That's not the way of children, though. They're more likely to feel hurt and go away. But the onus isn't one on them, anyway. It's on us. We're the grown folks, supposedly able to make ourselves do hard things.

WHAT CAN LIBRARIES DO?

What can libraries do for these children to avoid being just another establishment institution catering only to its own kind? You'll notice that I'm assuming that we *want* to do something, wonderful people that we are. Here are my three suggestions:

1. Get them what they need.

Have a solid materials collection for use by children and teens, at risk or not. Good library service to them requires accuracy, variety and quantity. All materials must be up-to-date, be varied in format, style and age/interest/skill levels, and occur in sufficient quantity as to satisfy demands.

2. Invite them in.
   - See that all materials are physically accessible. Not just entrance and elevator, but also floor plan and shelving height, affect accessibility.
   - Make things look inviting; nobody willingly goes into an unattractive setting. Ugly is just as literally repulsive, and just as deliberate. The message gets across clearly either way.
   - Have *lots* of programs. Most children would never set the first foot inside the library without them; those at risk are even less likely to come in on their own. Tailor the subject matter and presentation format to the *specific* needs of your actual users and those you're hoping to attract. This of course, presupposes a *very* close look at your public.

3. Treat them right.

   Think of all these youngsters as welcome guests in your own home. You want them to be comfortable while they're there, you want them to think well of you, and you want them to come back. Any good youth librarian follows these tenets.

"...reading...enabling children to break out of the molds of poverty...."

The library's obligations are many and varied. As *Libraries Serving Youth* put it, "Good collections, skilled professionals, a policy of intellectual freedom and full access to interlibrary loan are necessary in order for young people to make best use of the library." (These concerns are by no means a universal given in New York State; we need to keep working on them.) While these things are needed by all youth, they are crucial for youth at risk. To quote the same source, "There is no way to overemphasize the role of reading in enabling children to break out of the molds of poverty and family educational deprivation. Libraries are the best hope for putting books and children in close proximity when parents don't or don't know how."

SPECIFICALLY WHAT CAN LIBRARIES DO UP FRONT?

Story hours and read-alouds

Youth at risk are less likely to be aware of the mainstream commonality of knowledge and experience that comes from early exposure to a wide range of literature. Even before they can read, young children hear and absorb all the tiny bits of information they get from stories. They become a part of their subconscious. If they can't get those bits at home, the only other place they can find everything from *The Three Bears* to *The People Could Fly* in concentrated doses is the library.

Good collections

Suitable reference material is required, and lots of it, because it's more efficient for short answers and mass school assignments. Paperbacks in great numbers, especially for teens. Magazines at all reading levels. Pamphlets, films and videos, records and tapes, computer software and toys, large print, Kurzweil readers, talking encyclopedias, etc. All these are appropriate and desirable as dictated by local needs.

Class visits

They're one of the most efficient ways of introducing large numbers of children and teens to the library and what it offers. They allow for both enthusiasm and a controlled environment. After a good class visit a teacher can continue and build on the experience, thus enabling the children to make the link between books at school and books at the library.

Preschool programs

They can promote an awareness of language, an appreciation of art, experience in socializing, development of small and large motor skills, practice in following instructions, and a taste for music. They're fun. They offer prereading skills to either day-care center groups or loose kids.

Parenting collections

A separate grouping of adult books can be in the Children's Room having to do with child care and prereading encouragement activities. The books can be drawn from any area of the collection.

Parenting workshops

Conduct these for teen or adult parents, grandparents, teachers, baby-sitters, etc., on any relevant area of child care — from books to discipline or nutrition.

Aggressive readers advisory services

This involves swearing off the chair behind the desk. Characteristics: wandering around with and in search of children and teens, much book-related conversation with them, remembering their names and the books they read, note-taking for ordering and weeding purposes, and a healthy fatigue at the end of the day.

Parent/child literacy programs

Correct one literacy problem and prevent another

in one fell swoop. Teen or adult parent and child learn together, enjoy books and reinforce a close bond between them.

Reading clubs and summer reading programs

Children support each other, socialize and use their skills over the summer. Without reading during the summer, their skills deteriorate.

Cultural explorations

Two birds with one stone: indulge children's fascination with how people live in other cultures, and make local residents with those cultural backgrounds feel valued.

RIF

Reading is Fundamental (RIF) matches local funds three-to-one for free book distributions to children and teens. Nothing stimulates an interest in reading quite like being given a book you've chosen yourself.

After-school programs

Good for all children, but an especially good response to the "latch-key" controversy raging all over the country. There are anywhere from 100,000 to 300,000 children in New York State who are on their own after school hours.

Teen programs

These emphasize coping skills and a "preparation for life" approach: term paper clinics; employment workshops; basic finance; teen law; talks by popular authors; appropriate movies; etc. Talk to them about what you're planning, and let them help and offer suggestions. By and large, 12- to 18-year-olds form 10 percent of the population nationwide, but represent 25 percent of all library users.

Support collections

All programs need to be backed up by related materials. If you have a teen/adult literacy program, for example, have material appropriate to the skills and interests of newly or marginally literacy teens or adults.

WHAT LIBRARIES CAN DO BEHIND THE SCENES

Work for the money to do what's needed.

While faith and hope are a must for good works, money buys more books, pays more staff and builds more wheelchair ramps. Public relations is not a luxury.

Give children of all ages the information they ask for in a format they can use.

If they ask, it's because they need it. Don't make snap judgments about the value of the questions asked; baseball statistics are important, too. In addition, leave censorship to parents. Buy that book, keep it out of that drawer and show the children how to use it. Talk to them about it so they can put it in perspective.

Use interlibrary loan.

It's not a substitute for buying basics, but a way of supplementing a collection. That way everybody doesn't have to buy everything.

Train the staff.

"The youth librarian's role should be that of nurturer of the intellectual curiosity of children and teenagers," says *Libraries in Service to Youth*. One is not born knowing either books or children, and one never knows it all. Train and keep on training.

Encourage school and public libraries to talk to each other, and teachers to talk to both.

Cooperation is the only way to get the most appropriate materials, minimize unnecessary duplication, and reduce the frustration level for the young (not the mention the librarian).

Make sure that the need for services for youth is reflected in staffing, materials budget, and attitudes.

If children and teens make up 65 percent of your users, they should not be allocated 35 percent of the staff budget. They must also not be subjected to discrimination because of their age. To support your demands, keep full and accurate statistics on acquisitions, circulation, program attendance, reference questions and general in-house population density.

LIBRARIANS' INVOLVEMENT

Librarians have a history of wanting to make a difference to somebody, to do something emotionally rewarding, to have an effect in the long run. No instant gratification for us. When was the last time you heard anybody say that the appeal of librarianship was its high salary and great perks?

We must remember that we have a stake in society's future, which is coming closer every day. That toddler, or pre-adolescent or teenager over there may be the next generation's congressperson, or corporation owner or library director. We can be confident if we've done our best to show our young people life's richness and possibilities and make a conscious effort to exclude no one from the experience we're trying to share.

The "Oh boy! Here they come." of the title can be seen in two ways. It can be read as the complaint of the librarian unprepared to deal with the legitimate demands of a profession, or as the eager anticipation

of someone with energy and a determination to "fight the good fight" ready to leap into the fray.

That's our choice, really. Run or fight, sink or swim, sheep-hood or goat-ness, calm societal backwater or exciting vortex of optimistic, welcoming activity. Let our collective conscience be our persistent, niggling source of self-examination.

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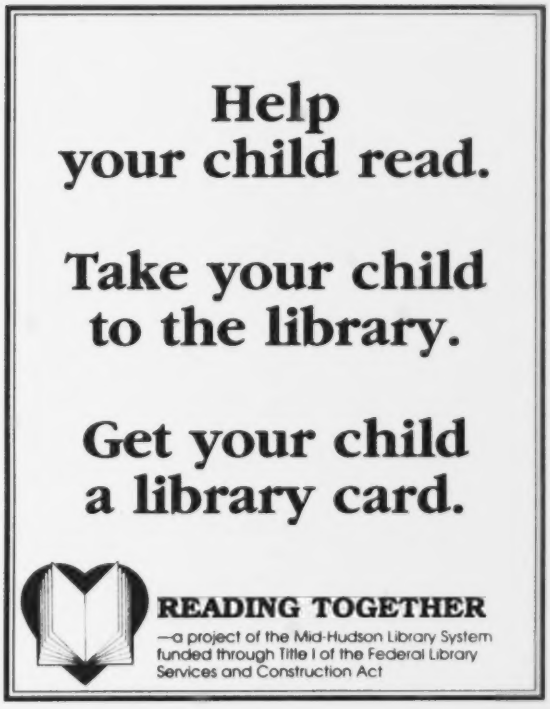

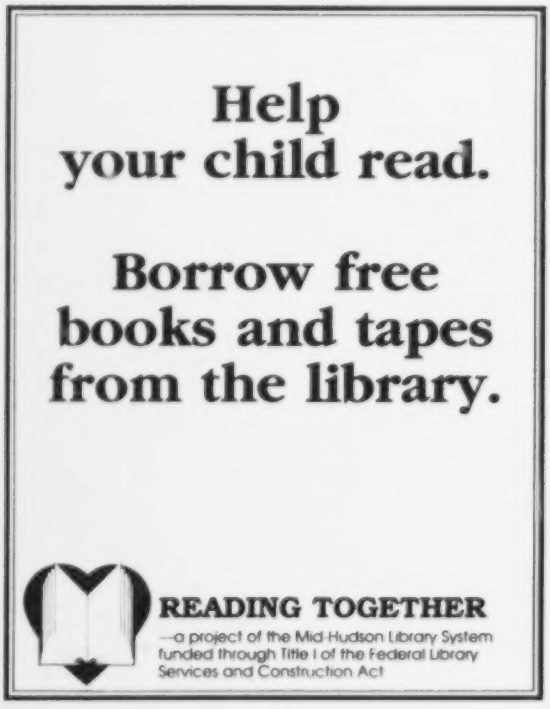

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MOHONK!

By Mary A. Brown, Director, Rye [NY] Free Reading Room,
and Past President, Youth Services Section,
New York Library Association

It was April 1986, and I was coordinating a million last-minute details for the Mohonk Conference when a member of the staff dared to interrupt me:

"Mary, you've got to look at this."

"After April 18th," I growled.

"No, now. It's the April Fool's issue of the *Rye Garnet*. Katie's the editor."

These people are nuts, I thought. I already know one of our pages edits the high school newspaper. Besides, I'm busy.

"Oh, all right." (After all, I had to admire her courage in interrupting me!) "What is it?"

It was a headline — front page and full width:

LIBRARY BUYS BOOK!

The article went on to say that the Board of Education, recognizing the importance of school libraries, had made an appropriation for the purchase of a new book. It would probably be a paperback, said school librarian Mary Margaret Jones, as the Board had allocated only $6.95 to the purpose. A sidebar followed with student reactions — "Read one, Read 'em all" and so forth. (Mary Margaret reported to us afterward that she put out a little stand with a succession of paperbacks on it, "The New Book," and did a brisk business.)

Well, we all had a hearty laugh. And I thought, Wow! things are so bad for libraries that even the kids know about it.

Salaries are embarrassing. People with Masters degrees and an enormous capacity to help earn so little they cannot support themselves. People came to Mohonk who earned less than $10,000 a year.

Many library schools no longer offer courses in literature and services for children and teenagers, nor do they retain full-time faculty to teach the courses remaining. They are responding to market pressures that, because of the salary situation, are drawing librarians to business as information scientists.

As a result, schools and public libraries cannot find librarians. A significant portion of New York's school librarians are retiring now. There is no one in the pipeline to replace them.

There are problems with perceptions. Children's librarians are too often confused with children by administrators who do not know why good youth service is important or how to bring it about.

Fiscal times are tight right now. Budget pressures seem inevitably to result in the elminiation of youth service positions. We can look around the State and count youth positions that no longer exist. The State Library's reduction to zero youth consultants led the way.

A new view of the librarian as generalist usually results not in better and broader-based service to youth but in no service.

All of this is occurring against a backdrop of increasing awareness of the importance of libraries and reading in the educational process and to society. We are perhaps a little dismayed to learn that a generation focussed on media has not entirely brought us the expansion in academic versatility we had hoped for.

Reading is a critical skill both in school and at work; the erosion of the particular cognitive skills reading fosters is showing up in shorter attention spans, decreased ability to draw inferences, and less capable imaginations.

The Mohonk Conference was born because State Librarian Joe Shubert had come to share our urgency about the state of library service to youth. Each August the incoming, present, and past presidents of the Youth Services Section of the New York Library Association visit him to discuss the problems facing librarians serving youth. In August of 1985 he asked us if we'd consider running a conference for the State that would use national expertise and resources to examine these problems and recommend courses of action. He envisioned a gathering that would bring us all together — school and public librarians (gulf), librarians and administrators (another gulf), and everybody and the State-level leadership (a great gulf); and suggested an LSCA grant as the means to make this possible. We accepted the challenge, and the Mohonk conference was the result.

At the Conference, we attempted to achieve a statewide agenda to permit solution of the problems we have. To do this we gethered the State's library leadership, its youth librarians, and speakers whose experience with libraries and youth gave them national stature. Peggy Sullivan, Leslie Edmonds, Todd Strasser, Margaret Mary Kimmel, and Regina Minudri illuminated the issues, and 12 discussion groups formulated proposals toward solutions.

The significant result is intangible but nonetheless very real: An atmosphere of recognition and coopera-

tion now characterizes the library community's responses to the concerns of youth service. These concerns have credibility. We saw this recognition translated into legislative proposals and expanded commitment of staff time in the Division of Library Development at the State Library.

"For many of us it was a personal pledge."

Conference attendees went home with action steps already thought out, and many of these steps have become actualities. For example, I had promised myself on leaving the conference that before the morass of management closed over my head I'd go to see the Superintendent of Schools and affirm the importance of reading. I went, he soared off into a flight of fancy, and the result was Rye Reads, a year-long program involving the entire community. We culminated a year of "Drop Everything and Read" weeks, storytelling, author spearkers, etc. with a 24-hour read-in at the library. Things like this happened all over the State after Mohonk.

We finished the Conference with a slight surplus earned from registration fees paid by participants and decided to use the money to fund some of the action steps participants were working on. We looked for projects involving several libraries and library types and funded eight proposals before we ran out of money.

Stories To Go brought ready-to-share kits into school and public libraries in a rural part of the State so that small staffs could easily present new materials to their preschool and elementary audiences.

A teen drama group performed for librarians and others working with teenagers to increase the adults' awareness of teens and adolescent culture.

Four regions presented conferences to promote the sort of cross-library sharing that was one of Mohonk's hallmarks. One of the sponsoring groups first surveyed its libraries to see to what extent the 1984 standards for youth services in public libraries of New York State were met and then focused its conference on addressing deficiencies.

Two recruitment brochures were produced. One was aimed at undergraduate education and literature students who might not have thought of youth librarianship as an attractive career. The other was aimed at parents using libraries with their children and suggests librarianship as a career choice for parents reentering the job market.

On their own at least two groups were formed: the Long Island Task Force on Youth Services brought together librarians as well as people from allied youth-serving institutions to work on legislation and other concerns. METRO, the New York City area Reference and Research Library Resources System, formed a Task Force on Library Service to Youth. The Task Force held a conference and worked on concerns related to library school curricula. Both groups are currently inactive, but both set patterns in their two years of operation that can be taken up again as needed.

We look forward to more Mohonks, whether in the formal sense of conferences with agendas or the informal sense of people working from a shared commitment to bring the best libraries have to offer into the lives of young people.

YOUTH INDICATORS 1988

To spotlight the concerns of young people between the ages of 14 and 24, the U.S. Department of Education has published *Youth Indicators 1988*. It provides a long-term and comprehensive perspective on the welfare of young people through 55 charts and tables. These trace developments since 1950 — including living arrangements, drug use, suicide, teen pregnancy, scout membership, literacy, attitudes, and values.

Youth Indicators is available from the Superintendent of Documents, US Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402-9325. Stock #065-000-00347-3, $7.

NOTES FROM A MESSY DESK

By Lois Rigoulot, Director,
Millbrook [NY] Free Library

Does a large portion of the accumulation on your desk and in file folders and notebooks and boxes consist of wildly assorted scraps of paper and cards with wonderful — or at least interesting — ideas for things you would like to do or ought to do some day? Mine does. And if you are, like me, the sole professional/administrator of a small public library, these ideas range from how to get better cleaning service through all aspects of library service to ivory tower dreams. Many of mine came out of the Mohonk Conference: some are being planned, some are vague hopes for the future and some had been forgotten until I reread them in preparation for writing this article.

MOOD FROM MOHONK CONFERENCE

The value of a conference like Mohonk is not just in what its participants take home and begin to work on immediately. It is also in the reinforcement it gives to what one is already doing (and we were already doing a number of good things), in the refreshment and renewal of spirit in both the retreat from the daily workspace and the fellowship with fellow practitioners and others supportive of what we do, and in the not-now-but-someday ideas that can, after slow germination, bear wondrous, surprising blossoms and fruit, often far from their original inspirations.

MOHONK APPLICATIONS AT MILLBROOK

The most immediate application of Mohonk ideas in our library, and the easiest to effect, was the elimination of the age and writing requirement for issuing library cards. We had required that a child be in or about to enter kindergarten and able to write his/her name. We now require only that the child desire the card, feeling that receiving the first library card affords such pleasure to young children that it shouldn't be given before they can enjoy it. Shortly after we began this policy, I read Eleanor Estes' *Rufus M.*, especially the chapter cited by Kristine Hoy Thorson in "Make Your Point" in the May 1988 *School Library Journal*, a passage that should be required reading for all librarians, about four-year-old Rufus' determined struggle for his own library card.

Some of the Mohonk recommendations were for personal actions. I wrote to Nasser Sharify, Dean of Pratt Institute's Graduate School of Library and Information Science, from which I received my degree, of my concern about Pratt's lack of representation at the conference and the lack of children's services courses at Pratt as well as the great need for youth services librarians in New York State. I began reading books on child development, particularly helpful for a childless librarian. I became a member of the Mid-Hudson Library System's Children's Services Advisory Committee and a member of the Millbrook School District's Board of Education. I have begun attending library conferences including sessions, as was recommended, outside my fields of interest. Probably the most valuable of these was the preconference on planning at the 1988 Public Library Association Conference, which will enable us to plan more effectively to select and implement as much as possible those wonderful ideas scattered on my desk and in my files.

One of our units of picture-book shelving was always too tall for the top sections to be used. After Mohonk we bought a new unit of lower shelving and now use the upper part of the old unit for our new Parents' Shelf, now filling six shelves and growing, which consists partly of books drawn from our regular collection and partly a special purchase funded by local grant money. All books are marked with red tape reading "Parents' Shelf," and catalog cards are similarly stamped in red. Many of the books drawn from the regular collection had been virtually undiscovered there but are now more easily browsed and borrowed. Often they are on subjects parents had not even thought to find in the library. The lower shelves are used for our expanding collection of toddler books.

"...the Mohonk Conference helped to push general ideas and principles into definite plans and actions."

I do not mean to imply that we had never heard or thought of any of these things before, but that the atmosphere and concentration of the Mohonk Conference helped to push general ideas and principles into definite plans and actions and to reinforce the rightness of some things we are already doing. For example, all of the grades in the local parochial school and

some from the local day school come to the library regularly, every four weeks, for book talks and stories. At times I have questioned the great amount of preparation time this requires and have also wondered if I should stress more library skills and less reading for pleasure. Mohonk confirmed me in feeling that the visits were worth the time and that the emphasis on reading for pleasure was right. We give all the assistance and encouragement we can for school reports when it is needed and asked for, but we feel our most important mission is to promote joy in reading.

After a few unproductive faculty meetings some years ago, I had given up trying to work with the public schools except when teachers came to me; but, trying to meet Mohonk expectations, this year we invited the elementary schools to hold a faculty meeting in the library, asked the teachers to let us know what we could do for them, and were well pleased with the response. (Of course, my being on the school board didn't hurt.) This fall we will invite the high school faculty to meet here.

"I am also more aware of male authors...."

Applying some of Todd Strasser's observations about teenagers, we are buying more paperbacks, which are kept on spinners in no particular order, which seems to be how they prefer them. I am also more aware of male authors, since many boys won't read anything by a woman, and conscious of selecting books about a boy's experience of crushes, a topic just as much a part of a boy's growing up as a girl's, but too seldom treated in Young Adult novels.

SMALL LIBRARY SITUATION

An advantage of the "one-professional library" is that the children's and young adult librarian is the director, adult services librarian, reference librarian, technical services librarian, etc. The whole collection is known and easily called upon in serving young people, and the whole range of borrowers is in mind when books are ordered. There is no rivalry, no need to feel belittled or ignored because youth services are undervalued. The librarian presents ideas for youth services directly to the board of trustees, not through an intermediary. A disadvantage is that the multiplicity of duties, interests and responsibilities creates limits of time, energy and concentration. One needs to learn to be patient with oneself and others. One learns often that "Life is what happens while you are making other plans." It was easy to persuade my board of trustees to pay for occasional courses for staff members as they already pay for me to attend conferences. However, the staff member first chosen this spring spent several weeks in the hospital instead — the fourth time since Mohonk that a member of my very small and usually very healthy staff has been hospitalized.

IDEAS FOR FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

Therefore, many of the ideas still remain ideas, though some are near implementation, but that is neither undesirable or discouraging. Improving services of any kind is a continuing process; some ideas and influences linger even when not immediately acted upon and may even be improved by their long gestation. Some engender others, seemingly only tenuously related, and the influence extends beyond youth services into all aspects of the library.

Of those Mohonk-engendered ideas for which we have fairly definite "someday" hopes, some are to:

- establish a circulating collection of framed and/or laminated prints, posters and maps for children
- work with teachers to alert parents, especially parents of poor readers, to library services for children and parents and their importance for success in school
- meet with reading specialists, school librarians and principals to make the Young Adult section more attractive and comfortable with such things as corkboard for posters and book displays related to movies and other topics of interest to teens
- make up pamphlets on the library to place where parents are — doctors' and dentists' offices, the WIC office, nursery schools, etc.
- meet with more community leaders and groups to let them know what we can offer to them and to find out what they would like from us
- develop a community information file
- schedule sessions, open to both adults and young adults, on job applications and interviews (the library system makes these available)
- develop with the cooperation of the schools an after-school program of homework assistance and literacy volunteers in the library
- hold summer storyhours for older children, perhaps at the town pool or village garden (this had an informal beginning in the library last year)
- be at kindergarten registration days to promote the library (The PTO has offered to assist.)

- go to English classes at the high school just before summer vacation to encourage library use
- offer a noncredit course in children's literature at the Dutchess Community College extension in Millbrook
- press for more "Mohonk" conferences (at Mohonk, of course) and to encourage others to attend

A messy desk is often the sign of someone who sees so many possibilities in life that he or she cannot reject them and wants not only to hold on to them but to keep them at hand. It is also the sign of someone who will, quite literally, drop what he or she is doing to help whoever needs assistance. And it is the sign of someone who is often overworked, overextended, frustrated and overtired — but never bored.

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IN SEARCH OF . . . STANDARDS FOR YOUTH SERVICES IN THE PIONEER LIBRARY SYSTEM OF NEW YORK STATE

By Linda Clark Benedict, AV/Automation Consultant,
Wayne County Library System / Ontario Cooperative Library System, Newark, NY

In July 1984, the Council of the New York Library Association adopted the *Standards for Youth Services in Public Libraries of New York State*. These *Standards* were the work of a Task Force made up of past presidents of the Youth Services Section of NYLA and an appointed representative of the State Education Department. Their goal was to set standards for "quality service to youth."

In April 1986, a conference, "Libraries Serving Youth: Directions for Service in the 1990s," was presented at the Mohonk Mountain House in New Paltz, NY. As a follow-up, a survey of the libraries and branches was conducted to heighten awareness of the *Standards* and to ascertain how well they were being met.

An extensive questionnaire, based on the published *Standards*, was sent to each of the libraries in the Pioneer Library System, which consists of 79 libraries in Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Wayne and Wyoming counties. Of questionnaires sent, 96 percent were completed and returned.

The libraries can be grouped into almost equal thirds by the size of population that they serve:

23 serve over 25,000
26 serve between 5,000 and 24,999
25 serve fewer than 4,999

Looking at the libraries in terms of the amount of their total budget:

23 budget over $100,000
30 budget between $25,000 and $99,999
22 budget less than $24,999

The survey collected information about collections, programs, budget, time use and expertise. The following is an overview of the results from the survey.

STANDARDS FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Though it is stated in the *Standards* that all libraries should have a written selection policy, less than 60 percent of the Pioneer libraries do.

The children's and young adult librarians are confident in their knowledge of children's literature and the needs and interests of children, and they feel somewhat familiar with their communities. They read children's literature and reviewing journals on a regular basis.

Most of the Pioneer libraries include records and cassettes in their youth collections, and about 40 percent include videotapes. The youth specialists, however, feel only somewhat familiar with audiovisual materials and new technologies. Very few libraries have recorders, projectors or microcomputers available for patron use.

The *Standards* state that 30 percent of the library's materials budget should be spent on children's materials, but only two libraries spent that much. Only 17 libraries spent the suggested 10-25 percent of the children's materials budget on audiovisual materials. On the positive side, all but three libraries have an approximately 50 percent balance between fiction and nonfiction.

More than half of the libraries give children equal access to all library materials. Videotapes are the materials most often restricted.

Only 13 children's specialists have what they define as regular contact with community agencies serving youth, and 22 have regular contact with the school media centers in their communities. Still, there were an average of 38 class visits to the public library in 1986 where there is more than one MLS employed.

Although community surveys are recommended by the *Standards*, only 30 libraries have conducted library user surveys, and only 17 have conducted community surveys.

Almost every library gives equal reference service to youth, including interlibrary loan and reader guidance.

In order to evaluate the number of programs done in 1986, the libraries were divided according to the number of professional librarians on the staff. The *Standards* call for 48 programs per year where there is a full-time children's specialist, and, in the case of libraries without a full-time person, the *Standards* call for 12 programs per year. Our libraries with more than one MLS provided an average of 118 programs last year. Our libraries with one MLS average 40 programs. Those with no MLS average 32. Thus, all libraries exceed the *Standards*.

STANDARDS FOR YOUNG ADULT SERVICE

Young adult services in the Pioneer Library System are considerably weaker than children's services, except in the area of budget. Where the *Standards* suggest that 10 percent of the library materials budget be spent on young adult materials, most of those re-

sponding spent that much or more; most meet or exceed the recommended amount to be spent on paperbacks. In contrast, most are well below the amount recommended for nonprint materials.

The *Standards* call for 12 programs per year where there is a full-time young adult specialist and 2 where there is not. Our libraries with more than one MLS came close with an average of 10.4 programs. Those with one MLS greatly surpassed the standard with an average of 8.9 programs.

STAFFING

Almost half of the libraries have a staff member whose prime responsibility is children's work. Only a little over a quarter have a person whose prime responsibility is young adult work. Where there is a youth specialist, goals and objectives for services are set, and monthly and annual reports are generally made.

MANAGEMENT IN YOUTH SERVICES

Released time for professional and continuing education activities is available in about 65 percent of the libraries, with only 57 percent of the libraries providing monetary support for such activities. Opportunities for advancement within their own library organization are available in less than 20 percent of the libraries.

CONCLUSIONS

As the survey results were compiled, surveyors concluded that in many cases the *Standards* are not being met because the youth specialists are not aware of particular standards. For example, if the librarian were aware that a certain percentage of the materials budget is recommended for replacements, it might be relatively simple to meet the standard.

The fact that less than the recommended amount is spent on nonprint materials is most likely because the youth specialists do not feel particularly familiar with such materials and where to acquire them. The lack in young adult programming may relate to the relatively small number of librarians whose prime responsibility is young adult work.

At the completion of the survey analysis, it was recommended that our youth specialists should be supported with continuing education on the *Standards* and strategies for meeting them. Topics should include selection policy, outreach to school media centers and community agencies serving youth, community surveys, library management skills, audiovisual materials and new technologies.

Also, we need to recognize the young adult population as a greater priority by making sure our libraries have someone whose prime responsibility is young adult services.

The knowledge of our youth specialists in their areas of expertise is impressive. The children's programming is amazing, considering the number of very small libraries in the system. We have only to be aware of our weak points to begin stretching our areas of knowledge and to meet the *Standards for Youth Services*.

UPDATE — SEPTEMBER 1987 AND APRIL 1988

A follow-up workshop for library staff and trustees was presented in September 1987 to share ideas to improve youth services and to develop a common understanding of library services that should be available to young people.

A short survey was done in April 1988 to determine progress being made towards meeting *Standards*. The Youth Specialists were asked if they were more aware of the *Standards* than they were a year ago; 76 percent are more aware, largely due to the original questionnaire and the workshop. Twenty percent have increased their budget for youth materials, 9 percent showed an increase in staff, 13 percent have more support or opportunities for continuing education, 12 percent have an increased AV budget, 7 percent have increased their equipment to be used by youth, and 23 percent report a change in philosophy of the staff and/or trustees towards youth services. Of the 40 percent that did not have a written selection policy, 10 percent either now have one or are working on one. Fifty-one percent also reported some positive change other than those already mentioned. When asked "if there have been no changes, why not?", 44 percent answered that it was due to lack of funds or staff.

GREAT OPPORTUNITIES

By Suzanne Moore, Librarian,
W. W. Smith Humanities Magnet School,
Poughkeepsie [NY] City School District

There is a sign over my desk. It says, "Surveys have shown that those children under the age of 12 who have positive experiences in...libraries become regular adult users." (*Library Currents*, July 1987)

My desk is in a school library media center in a magnet school for third, fourth and fifth graders in Poughkeepsie. The school opened in September 1987. Before that my desk was in the Poughkeepsie Public Library children's room. I have had a rather unusual opportunity to work with the same children in the capacity of public librarian and school librarian. I have also had the good fortune to attend the Mohonk Conferences of April and November 1986.

Perhaps because of these experiences and the two thought-provoking conferences, I have spent a lot of time in the last year asking myself, "What do these children need from me?" Here are some of my thoughts. Children need my attention and caring. They need the best collection of materials that I can possibly put together, and they need a positive atmosphere in order to make steps toward becoming active participants in their own education.

Before anything else can happen in the library, I need to establish a relationship with the children. For some it is a hug each morning or a report at the end of the day that it was a good day and isn't that great, or it was a horrible day and I never want to come here again. For other children it is the understanding between us that there are some books that I don't like and some that you won't like and they don't have to be the same ones but let's talk about it anyway; or it is the instant understanding that yes! I find blue whales a lot more interesting than Greek mythology, too.

Children need me to remember their names — to look at them as individuals with individual likes and dislikes and interests. Children need to know that I make mistakes and so can they. They need to know that I think they are more important than the books — that if they lose a book, it is not the end of the world — we can work it out and they can borrow another one. Children need to know that they can make me really angry today and I will still be glad to see them tomorrow. They need me to be a caring adult who is glad to see *them*.

This relationship is the payback that keeps me in children's library work. It is the reason that I put up with the administrative "nitty gritty" and the budget cuts and the books that come incorrectly processed — again. That hug in the morning is probably more important to me than to the child. It is the force that drives me to fight for the best collection of materials I can put together.

My job as collection builder is to provide extensive variety through the acquisition of as many materials on as many subjects as possible. This means books on birds and birds nests and going and finding old bird nests for city children to see. It means blowing out bird eggs and cutting down paper wasp nests to hang in the library. It means fish tanks and terrariums with lizards. It means carved nutcrackers and dinosaur sculptures. And, it means lots and lots of books and tapes and filmstrips.

Children need to have access to vast numbers of ideas and opinions — even conflicting information. They need to know that books are not always right, that information is not absolute, and that they can question what they read and see. They need to know that there are lots of places and ways of getting information.

I try to think about different learning styles when I build collections. I am lucky enough to have electronic encyclopedias and computerized databases in my library. The information isn't really different from that found in regular encyclopedias and reference books, but it gives children one more place to look and one more way of learning to gather information.

"The library is a place where everyone can be a winner."

Children learn how to gather information when they have a burning desire to know something. A collection should spark that desire and then provide information to feed the spark; and the spark may be a picture, a computer program, a magazine article — who knows. I need to provide as many possibilities for sparks as I can. And I have to remain interested myself, even when I think I don't have time. When that silent fourth grade boy shyly brings me a painted turtle he found, I need to be enthusiastic and ask lots of questions — not to show the child what he doesn't know but to spark interest in finding out more.

I need to be aware that for some children a printed page is not an easy way to learn; to remember that those words don't come alive for everyone; to make the words more real with videotapes and filmstrips.

Most of all, children need a positive environment in which to learn. The library is a place where everyone can be a winner. When I plan activities, I need to be careful to not always reward the same children. I *can* plan activities so that every child will be rewarded. I need to create a supportive, caring atmosphere in order for children to have the courage to take chances, to try learning something new on their own.

The library is a place to respect the varied abilities of the children who use it. Children borrow books for many reasons, and they use them in lots of ways. One child may look at the pictures. One may read the same book five times. Another may read 50 different books. I don't have to judge a child's book use and, by extension, judge the child.

Our job as youth services librarians is to help children move into the future with the knowledge-gathering skills they will need to help them continue learning, even after they leave school. *And* to somehow pass on the magic of sharing stories and good books. As librarians working with children, we have to work toward both of these goals by providing positive experiences; we don't want to scare them out of the library forever.

The other sign over my desk says, "We are all faced with a series of great opportunities brilliantly disguised as impossible situations." Don't let the disguises fool you; as youth services librarians we have a truly great opportunity to make a difference in children's futures.

A LEARNING ODYSSEY

The College of Humanities and Fine Arts, University at Albany, the New York State Library's Division of Library and the State Education Department's Bureau of School Library Media Programs have submitted a proposal to the National Endowment for the Humanities entitled "A Learning Odyssey." Three sections of the New York Library Association are cosponsoring the program: the Public Library Section, the School Library Media Section and the Youth Services Section.

The project would involve a three-day conference at the Mohonk Mountain House in New Paltz to train 40 "teams" of school and public librarians to work with local humanities scholars to develop young adult programming with a humanities focus in public libraries. Teams would be recruited from every area of the State, representing the variety of sizes and types of rural, urban and suburban communities that make up New York State. Teams would work together at the local level before the Statewide Conference — scheduled for October 18-20, 1989 — preparing for specific training activities, and do local follow-up programming, planning, and sharing the expertise gained at the Conference. The Conference proceedings and program plans of the 40 teams will be published as a part of "A Learning Odyssey." The Mohonk Mountain House has been selected as the Conference site as this program is intended to be a "sequel" to the statewide "Libraries Serving Youth" Conference held there in April 1986.

The National Endowment for the Humanities is being asked for $148,600 out of a total project budget of $436,481. For more information on "A Learning Odyssey," contact: Anne Simon, Division of Library Development, New York State Library, Cultural Education Center, Albany, NY 12230; (518) 474-7890.

ADOLESCENT ILLITERACY: WHAT LIBRARIES CAN DO TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM — A REPORT ON THE RESEARCH OF THE PROJECT ON ADOLESCENT LITERACY*

By Judith Davidson, Director,
Project on Adolescent Literacy, Center for Early Adolescence,
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

There are 27 million illiterate adults in America today. There are 47 million more who are considered functionally illiterate.[1] In other words, they would have difficulty reading a newspaper article, writing a note to their child's teacher, or reading the warning on a medicine bottle.

It is in early adolescence that those who don't read or who read far below their peers and the expectations of school begin to cross the border into the illiteracy statistics. The National Assessment of Education Progress found that 40 percent of all 13-year-olds do not have the reading skills necessary to read and infer from a newspaper or textbook article.[2] These students will have difficulty performing the tasks that school demands.

In a society that places such a premium on literacy, illiteracy has devastating consequences. Experts have identified reading failure as a characteristic common to young adolescents facing a variety of problems. It is estimated that 85 percent of the juveniles who appear in court are unable to read.[3] Teen mothers are overwhelmingly from the ranks of illiterate adolescents.[4] Illiteracy has also been connected to high youth unemployment, teenage alcohol and drug abuse, and the problem of school dropouts.[5]

In 1985 the Project on Adolescent Literacy (PAL) at the Center for Early Adolescence set out to discover what was being done to solve the problem of adolescent illiteracy and out of what was being done, what was effective and why. A nationwide search for successful school and community-based programs netted surprisingly few candidates — a mere 350. Telephone interviews whittled the number of programs down even further. In the end, project staff made site visits to 17 school programs, 9 after-school programs, and 6 summer literacy programs.

The summer and after-school programs visited were sponsored by a variety of agencies from corporate volunteers and churches, to settlement houses and a literacy council. Conspicuously missing from the roster of sponsors of adolescent literacy programs, however, was the public library, and this despite the assistance of the American Library Association in soliciting program recommendations from members. This is indeed a grave omission, when one considers the vital role that libraries could play in promoting adolescent literacy.

This article will discuss the findings from the study that pertain to librarians, the essential ingredients of successful literacy programs, the role school and public librarians played in the programs visited, and the ways that libraries can improve services to young adolescents with literacy needs.

Librarians would feel very comfortable in the successful adolescent literacy programs the PAL staff visited. They would know immediately that they were in the company of people with similar beliefs. In successful literacy programs, staff believe that their students can and, with their help, will learn to read. This belief is very similar to the librarian's belief in the right of each individual to read. Staff members in successful literacy programs believe that their contributions as educators will be significant ones. Good librarians also believe that their contributions to helping individuals fulfill their reading needs will be significant ones. The beliefs of staff in both successful literacy and library programs are positive and affirming beliefs, and they shape these programs in a positive and affirming manner.

One of the most significant issues in literacy programs, PAL researchers found, was that of access: access to materials and to experienced readers and writers as well as the self-esteem and incentive to make use of that access.

In successful literacy programs students had access to a wide variety of printed materials. Classroom or program libraries were large and filled with a variety of good titles presented in exciting formats. In one classroom that PAL researchers visited in New York City, 24 bookshelves, each three feet high, were stuffed with good books, and more books were displayed in racks and on tables. The teacher added to the collection constantly, picking up new titles at sales, begging books from friends, or raiding locked school closets. Teachers in successful literacy pro-

*This article originally appeared in the *Journal of Youth Services In Libraries*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Winter 1988. Copyright 1988 by American Library Association. Reprinted by permission.

grams were familiar with the best in literature for this age group.

Professionals also need access to materials, and in successful programs, administrators and staff read and discuss new research as it is released. University and public libraries and school media collections provide them with many of these materials. In successful programs, staff are often active in professional organizations, attending conferences and subscribing to journals. It is axiomatic of these programs that administrators and teachers use research to enrich their work. Staff members from successful programs were eager to talk to PAL staff about the research ideas that had influenced their thinking. Most importantly, PAL staff observed, their learning was more than mere rhetoric, as it carried over into the daily work with students.

New readers and writers, whatever their age, need access to experienced readers and writers. By watching and interacting with experienced readers and writers, less experienced readers and writers learn the strategies they need for dealing with text. *Strategies* was a word that came up again and again in interviews with staff in successful literacy programs. By *strategies*, these educators mean the generic questions that readers and writers ask themselves as they pilot their way through the text. For instance, experienced readers have many strategies for figuring out unknown words: they may read to the end of the sentence, read back over the last paragraph, or flip to the back of the book and check in a glossary. Older beginning readers and writers are often those students who have not had access to experienced readers and writers and, therefore, lack a wide repertoire of strategies for deciphering text. In successful literacy programs teachers make explicit to their students the strategies that experienced readers and writers use.

Students, however, will not be able to make use of the good books to which they have access nor benefit from the help of experienced readers and writers if they lack self-esteem and incentive. Good programs build students' self-esteem by giving each individual the opportunity to be successful and showing each of them that they can be competent learners. By setting individual and obtainable goals, focusing on developmental needs in conjunction with academic needs, and attending to students' strengths as well as their weaknesses, successful literacy programs actively engage students in the responsibility for their own learning.

Successful programs make reading and writing meaningful and exciting to students. Many older beginning readers and writers are not aware that there are books written about the matters of greatest concern to them, nor are they aware of the range of functions that literacy can fulfill in their lives. To promote reading, successful programs utilize many of the same activities that librarians have traditionally employed: flashy book displays, book talks, read-aloud times, and contests to promote independent reading. Use of curriculum that ties hands-on experiences to reading and writing and use of writing to explore reading were other methods frequently found in successful programs.

When they existed, good school libraries and librarians were important supports for successful literacy programs. The librarian was aware of the special population, knew the students' interests, and communicated frequently with the reading teacher. Unfortunately, such examples are few because of the appalling lack of school library services for this age group.

Many students reported to PAL researchers that they rely on the public library and librarians in many ways. Help with homework was at the top of their lists. An unfortunate by-product of the campaign for educational excellence had been an increase in the volume of homework assigned without any check on the quality of completed work. Students reported typical homework assignments requiring two and three hours per night. Young adolescents whose reading ability is at risk are the ones least likely to have an available adult who is capable of helping them with homework assignments. Many depend on the public librarian to supply that aid. Students also reported using the library as a safe and friendly place to spend the hours after school.

PAL researchers found few instances of collaboration among school and public library systems, and when collaborations did occur, it was because of individual initiative, not as part of a standard policy. Researchers also failed to find any summer or after-school literacy programs that have developed close ties with a public library.

Based on this study, there is clearly a need for improved school library services to this age group as a whole and to young adolescents with literacy needs in particular. There are also four areas where public libraries can work to improve their services to this population: materials, information and referral, programming, and staff development.

MATERIALS

Public libraries need collections of materials for older beginning readers and writers and the professionals and volunteers who work with them. Student materials should be bound in attractive formats and displayed in an eye-catching fashion. Librarians should be familiar with the materials and able to

booktalk many different selections. A professional collection for practitioners working with this population should include material on the problem of illiteracy, characteristics of young adolescents and how to plan programs for them, literacy teaching techniques, teaching reading and writing in the middle grades, and teaching English as a second language.

These student and professional materials should serve as the basis for deposit collections that can be lent to schools and agencies serving youth that lack a variety of materials. To ensure that students learn what the library has to offer, class visits should be organized through the school reading teacher or the director of the local literacy program.

INFORMATION AND REFERRAL

Public libraries should have a database of all programs available to young adolescents in the community, including literacy programs. Simply making this information available may serve as a catalyst that enables communities to become aware of the level of services and of the needs they may not have addressed.

To alert them to these resources, libraries need to sponsor special events for youth workers and educators. Many of them are unaware that libraries have more than books to offer.

PROGRAMMING

Libraries would be excellent sponsors or cosponsors of adolescent literacy programs. Perhaps a local church would supply volunteers for an afternoon "homework help table" or for tutoring students with special needs. A community-based agency, settlement house , girls' or boys' club, or YMCA could sponsor exciting workshops that would combine hands-on training with a literacy-skills curriculum. For instance, a group could learn important emergency techniques while studying any one of the numerous first aid materials written specially for reluctant readers. Read-aloud times are enjoyed by all age groups, and librarians, volunteers, or teens can serve as readers. Many programs have found cross-age tutoring a particulary effective way of helping students to improve their literacy skills. Students with reading problems can help students at lower levels, thereby reinforcing their own skills. The possibilities for cosponsors are as many and varied as the institutions in one's community: religious organizations, social agencies, businesses, and schools.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

If library staff are to develop, supervise, or participate in this programming, they will need additional training in the following: developmental characteristics of young adolescents and how they should guide and shape the design of programs for this age group, characteristics of successful adolescent literacy programs, techniques for teaching older beginning readers and writers, and techniques for teaching middle-grade literacy skills. Finally, training should help the staff to become sensitized to the new users and to develop ways of making them feel comfortable using the library.

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HOW TO GET TEENS READING AFTER THEY'VE WATCHED MTV!

By Diane Courtney, Adult / Young Adult / Media Consultant,
Westchester Library System, Elmsford, NY

Six videos, loosely based on popular young adult books, are among the tools book-talking librarians are carrying into the classrooms of Westchester County. The same videos, rock music and all, can be found in the public libraries of Westchester. Sometimes the students recognize them, for they have appeared on local cable stations throughout the County. Each video is short (30-60 seconds), depends heavily on music and is professional-looking and stylish enough to be taken for a rock video or even a jeans commercial! Yet the end of each bears a message urging teens to "Check out the book" or asking "Want to know what happens next? Ask you public library's young adult librarian." Then the name and logo of the Westchester Library System appears.

HOW DID WE GET INTO THIS?

In 1986, the Young Adult Services Advisory Board and the then Adult/Young Adult Consultant of the Westchester Library System, Barbara Newmark-Kruger, decided to respond to the needs of librarians for materials, techniques, training and programs to help them motivate young people to develop and use their reading skills. It is during the early adolescent years that the habit of reading for information and pleasure needs to be nurtured and encouraged. Even those youth with moderately good reading skills frequently do not read. The alternate pleasures of the television, video, film and computer technologies have taken their toll at the expense of reading, and the results have been well documented. The ensuing phenomenon — youth who can read but choose not to — has been labeled alliteracy; it is as great a problem as the functional illiteracy of other adolescents. Therefore, the Westchester Library System applied for and received LSCA Title I funding from the New York State Division of Library Development. This project sought to address the problem of the alliterate teen through a number of approaches, one of which was the creation of videos. The aim of the videos was to "intrigue the viewer, facilitate circulation of young adult materials in Westchester public libraries, and give meaning to the statement 'Ask your public library's young adult librarian.' "

WHY VIDEOS?

Given the enormous popularity of television programming such as MTV, it seemed natural to use that controversial media, television, to reach our targeted audience. At an early planning meeting, Katie Gohde, Young Adult Librarian at the Warner Library of the Tarrytowns, was selected to produce the videos because of her considerable experience and knowledge.

The original plan was to tape key scenes from a book, which would be identified by title and author — "electronic book-talking!" Choosing popular YA novels that would easily be found in the 38 public libraries of Westchester proved surprisingly simple; however, problems arose when five of the six publishers refused to grant us rights. An alternative plan surfaced: to make the scenes as "generic" as possible, identifying no title or author, but using "typical" scenes that might be found in romance, sports or coming-of-age novels.

This generic approach has both advantages and disadvantages. On the plus side is the fact that a YA librarian familiar with the videos can substitute other titles, thereby providing positive and immediate gratification to everyone who requests a book. But there are dangers; if the teens don't find the match a close enough one, the credibility of YA librarians and libraries in general is seriously diminished. There is also the very real possibility that librarians not well versed in YA literature would be stumped when "that book I saw on MTV" is requested.

Both problems were addressed via the creation of a booklist titled "Seen the Scene on MTV?...." This list of books that were, we hoped, closely matched to the videos, encouraged displays and fostered confidence among the non-YA librarians.

ELECTRONIC BOOK-TALKING: "CLIFFHANGERS" AND "RAPS"

During the planning, the decision was made to make two different types of videos: short dramatizations or "cliffhangers," which rely on a key scene to entice the viewer to want to know more, followed by a line such as "Want to know what happens next? Ask your public library's young adult librarian"; and "raps," which would summarize overall plot without giving it away and might end with an exhortation to "Go to the library and check out the book!"

The production of the videos was effected through a contract with Katie Gohde, who wrote the scripts and held auditions for area teens, aged 12-22. It was felt

that the use of local actors and locations would increase identification and add to the interest; all actors were selected from the 65 teenagers who auditioned, and all were volunteers.

A local cable company, American Cable Systems of Ossining, provided invaluable assistance by supplying equipment, editing facilities and even personnel. Ultimately, they were also to assist us with airing the videos, which by then had been termed PSAs (public service announcements). Westchester County receives New York City stations and has no television station of its own. There are, however, six cable companies that serve Westchester. This is not an ideal situation; three communities in the County are not yet wired for cable, and certainly not every household chooses to pay for cable. Nonetheless, a surprisingly large number of the population does get cable, so it was chosen as the best method of reaching alliterate teens.

THEMES OF THE VIDEOS

The end product was six lively, upbeat PSAs. The videos rely heavily on rock music (all music used was in the public domain!) and bear strong resemblance to rock videos. Two of the six are "raps." Only the one title for which we received publisher's permission is identified by name — *Ace Hits the Big Time*, by Murphy and Wolkoff; that is presented in a rap done by two girls. The other rap is a basketball player making his "moves" on the court and titled, appropriately, *I Make the Moves. No Pain, No Gain* features four male swimmers in a pool, talking about how tough this challenge is. *Dreaming About It* involves a Walter Mitty-type sequence: a teen is enjoying sports and romantic glory when there's an abrupt cut to a classroom where the teen is in fact being asked a question by his teacher. *Ingrid's Future* is the lament of a girl whose parents know what her future should hold, but she is less certain. *Romance at Warner* features a pair of teens sitting on the library steps talking; the girl wants to know whether the boy is interested in her and relieves him of the notion that she's his best friend's girl.

The videos were shown during MTV and similar programing in the early evening hours and generated much media attention. Six favorable articles appeared in the local newspapers as well as in the Westchester section of *The New York Times* on November 15, 1987 and in *Library Journal*, September 15, 1987.

YA librarians throughout the County reported that teens had wandered in, mentioned the videos and asked for the book. In addition, librarians themselves and system staff reported on the times and stations that aired "our" PSAs. A questionnaire was developed and sent to the cable stations, but results were disappointing as only one cable station keeps statistics on the number of PSAs shown or the times they are aired.

"Ask your public library's young adult librarian."

However, the PSAs proved themselves useful in another way when young adult librarians discovered their worth and took them along on class visits, using them as instant attention-getting "commercials" during their routine book talks and class visits. They also were used successfully in a recent program at a local residential institution, where teachers and cottage parents were exhorted to encourage reading in a variety of ways.

The number of requests for the PSAs has resulted in our adding them, in VHS videocassette format, to the Westchester Library System's Film Services Collection so that lending can be facilitated. Demand from outside the system has led us to make videocassette copies available at no cost to those interested.

CREDIT TO PEOPLE INVOLVED

As with any project of this type, credit is due to a number of people involved in making this project a success. Particular accolades go to Madeline Rawley, Assistant to the Adult/Young Adult Consultant, who supervised the project when the Consultant's position was vacant for nearly a year, helped me enormously when I arrived at the Westchester Library System in "medias res," and was instrumental in ensuring that the facts reported herein are accurate. All the YA librarians of the Westchester Library System contributed their time, effort and expertise in countless ways, especially the members of the Young Adult Advisory Board: Victoria E. Baldwin, Sally Bentley, Denise Mackey-Russo, Valerie Pepe and Jo-Anne Weinberg.

We hope that this program will inspire others to look for ways to improve services to young adults and foster in them the life-enriching reading habit. We especially would like everyone to realize that technology can be used to foster reading, not merely compete with it.

FEDERAL FUNDS FIGHT FAMILY ILLITERACY: THE FAMILY READING PROGRAM

By Carol Sheffer and Anne Simon,
Division of Library Development, New York State Library

One out of five adult Americans is functionally illiterate. Approximately 2.5 million New York adults need literacy services. Thousands of preschool children in this State have never had a book read to them. Hundreds of babies born to teenage mothers are not spoken to or communicated with verbally in the first months of their lives.

The Division of Library Development committed $700,000 of Library Services and Construction Act Title I funds to help the people described above.

In summer 1987, when it became clear that there would be money available to run an LSCA Title I invitational grant program, DLD staff discussed which type of need could be met most effectively. Remembering the success of the 1986 "Libraries Serving Youth" statewide conference held at the Mohonk Mountain House and our intention to assist youth services librarians, we decided that a family reading program, to help break the cycle of illiteracy, could provide new and better services to entire families.

In announcing this grant program, State Librarian Joseph Shubert quoted the Regents-adopted *Library Service to the People of New York State* (p. 28):

> What parents and children share before a child enters kindergarten has a powerful effect on the child's future. The extent to which parents introduce their children to books, culture, and learning helps determine lifelong learning habits, attitudes and skills. Among the most important of the preschool experiences is the development of skills of listening, speaking, and looking that prepare for reading and form the basis for the enjoyment of learning.

The announcement described a Family Reading Program to be a project of library preliteracy and literacy activities for families, especially those who are "at risk," to foster early literacy in young children and to encourage family members of all ages to become library users. The project would tie in with "The Best Gift" library card campaign sponsored by the American Library Association and the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. It would also enable libraries to integrate services for adult new literates with library services to their children.

"Families" in this project might include, but would not be limited to, children and: parents currently enrolled in adult literacy programs; teenage parents; single parents; grandparents; or others involved as care-givers. The program should provide reading preparation services for young children in public library settings and should train parents and others in reading aloud to their children. In addition, the program should provide technical assistance, support to adults, and any resources and materials necessary for its implementation.

To be eligible to receive funding for the Family Reading Program a public library system, as well as any member library sites, had to:

(a) Agree to offer new services to families with young children with the goal of helping the children become successful readers by increasing their general competence, self-confidence, and positive emotional associations with reading as a family experience and familiarity with the lifelong use of library resources.

(b) Register, as library borrowers, adults and children who are not current library users.

(c) Hold regular meetings of parents/care-givers and children in public library settings during hours that are suitable for parents/care-givers and their children.

(d) Ensure that public library children's services staff work in close coordination with adult literacy staff to assure maximum integration of literacy services to parents and preliteracy services to their children, when applicable. Libraries are encouraged to use children's books and language experience stories from the meetings as material for adult literacy instruction as appropriate.

(e) Provide activities designed to meet the needs of young children through the age of eight years. Storytelling, word games, and other exercises designed to promote enjoyment of reading in adults and children are encouraged.

(f) Provide instruction for adults in selecting and reading books aloud to children. In addition, libraries should provide assistance to adults in using services in order to access books and other materials on such topics as parenting, child care, health, nutrition, and family life education.

(g) Provide other services as necessary to enhance full intergenerational participation and to foster a family environment conducive to reading.

The 17 library systems, which have received up to $50,000 for a family reading program grant, have done each of these things. The program began November 1, 1987 and in 11 months served more than 220,000 users. The 107 libraries in 52 counties that were involved in this project offered 1,293 hours of special programming with an attendance of nearly 40,000 adults and children. Almost 37,000 books were purchased, and circulation of these materials was over 107,000 during the 11 months of the project.

The best feature of this invitational program was the fact that libraries of all sizes could, and did, participate. Queens Borough Public Library was the largest library involved in this LSCA grant program, and Barneveld Free Library Association (part of the Mid-York Library System), serving a population of 396, was the smallest.

While a journal article cannot do justice to the impact and success of these projects, we will do our best to summarize briefly what each system has achieved and highlight unique details of the individual projects.

Buffalo and Erie County Public Library

The project involved "lap-sit" programs for at-risk families. Along with regular storyhours, professional storytellers and a mime were used to bring families into the library. Parents and care-givers were given help with book selection.

Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System

This project offered: in-service training for librarians on serving parents; shared reading activities for parents and children; programs for parents to encourage them to read to their children; and presentations for agency personnel who deal with parents. Several of their programs were targeted for teen mothers.

Chemung-Southern Tier Library System

Programming for teen parents, storyhours for young children and other parent education programs were complemented by the use and loan of 120 Books Plus kits. The kits contained books, toys, activity suggestions and other theme-related items. Brochures, demonstrations and newspaper articles helped publicize the activities, which brought in over 8,000 participants and resulted in hundreds of new registered borrowers at member libraries.

Finger Lakes Library System

Member librarians were provided with in-service training on family programs. Mercer Mayer autographed books as a special program at one of the libraries.

Four County Library System

The System distributed 3,000 flyers through schools and to participants in the WIC program and adult literacy programs. Babysitting for children under the age of two was offered so that parents and older children could fully participate in the family programs.

Mid-Hudson Library System

"My Library Loves Me" logo on buttons, stickers, and summer reading program materials were distributed. Radio spots were aired on both AM and FM stations, targeting blue collar workers age 16-45. A special brochure, written at a very low reading level, urged functionally illiterate adults to bring their children to the library.

Mid-York Library System

The Birthday Club program rewarded parents who registered their children at the library with a "birthday card" sent on the child's birthday which could be exchanged at the local library for a system-produced coloring book. More than 1,100 children have been registered. Programming kits were designed so that member librarians who had never before presented a program could easily do so.

Mohawk Valley Library Association

Staff videotaped four presentations for parents on the importance of preliteracy activities for children. The program also included setting up "Family Reading Centers" in member libraries and presenting programs for children and parents such as: bedtime storyhours; author visits; puppet and animal shows.

Nassau Library System

"Baby Wise" contacted social service agencies to reach "at-risk" families and distribute "Welcome, Baby" packets. Four libraries held infant programs. The system received grants from European American Bank and Chase Manhattan Bank as well as funding from six libraries to distribute 930 copies of *Goodnight Moon* in the packets. Teen mothers have been a special focus on this project.

Nioga Library System

Use of Theme Packages and Activity Kits (destined for distribution to member libraries) was demonstrated at an in-service workshop. One of the storytime sessions was taped and run several times on the local Cable TV station.

North Country Library System

Story Time boxes and collections of read-aloud materials have been created and loaned to member libraries. Children's authors Cindi Wheeler and Hope Marston spoke to parents at eight libraries on the importance of sharing books with preschool children.

Onondaga County Public Library

"Reading Begins at Home" targeted low-income

families and publicized the program by making and distributing refrigerator magnets. Videotaped presentations for parents were shown on Cooke Cablevision. Onondaga County Public Library has also created "Reading Fitness" packs.

Pioneer Library System

A charming graphic of a parent bear and a child bear reading together was created as the logo for Pioneer's Reading Begins at Home program. They also developed a flyer aimed at literacy students and distributed it to volunteer tutors in their service area. For some of their small member libraries, this project represented the first time that they had attempted to present a program.

Queens Borough Public Library

The techniques and benefits of reading aloud were demonstrated, through the Read-Aloud project, to literacy students, parents, other care-givers and youth services providers. Jim Trelease's film based on his *Reading Aloud Handbook* was used at 10 of the programs. One workshop was conducted in Spanish. Participants were recruited from shelters for the homeless, community agencies, schools and day-care centers. One of the local television stations aired an interview with a participating parent who was an English-as-a-Second-Language literacy student.

Ramapo Catskill Library System

The Project Coordinator made 8,300 community contacts and distributed "Reading Is Sharing" brochures. Children have picked up 2,000 "I Love My Library" kits from member libraries.

Southern Adirondack Library System

Eight member libraries participated by sponsoring four system-organized programs for children and parents and "matching" these with four programs of their own. Each of these libraries received money for materials that, for the smallest libraries, doubled their book budgets. A veterinarian, a dentist, a town historian, a storyteller and others were invited to share books and related activities with children and parents.

Suffolk Cooperative Library System

Fourteen libraries showed Jim Trelease's "Reading Aloud" film. Concept Kits were prepared and an in-service training session about the kits was held. Project staff also report that the System board of trustees has been particularly supportive of this project.

Even as the LSCA project year comes to a close, the New York State Library's Family Reading Programs continue in a variety of ways. Due to the exceptional creativity, dedication and commitment of the youth services consultants and librarians associated with the project, many programs will carry on with the aid of local, State or Federal funds. Project ties with the national "Best Gift" campaign help keep the spirit of the program alive and well, too.

In 1989, other opportunities for support of library services to youth include The Year of the Young Reader — the Library of Congress campaign to spotlight the joys and importance of books and reading. Promotional materials such as brochures, posters, logos, buttons, banners, bags, bookmarks, t-shirts and rubber stamps are available from The Center for the Book, through the Library of Congress. Of special interest in our State is the New York State Decade of the Child program, which Governor Mario Cuomo has described as "a 10-year, continuous comprehensive commitment to save, support and strengthen the children of this State." Libraries and librarians, as youth services providers and community information specialists, should play a vital leadership role in developing this campaign. We cannot do this alone. We will need to draw on and expand our networks to include "*every individual* who plays a role in the lives of children, whether parents, educators or service providers." Our experience in networking with each other and the larger "community" — at the local, regional, state and national levels — gives us the expertise to promote and inspire this campaign. Where do *you* fit in?

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REGISTERING NEW CHILDREN AT THE LIBRARY: THE NEW YORK STATE "BEST GIFT" CAMPAIGN

By Ristiina Wigg, Children's Services Consultant, Mid-Hudson Library System, Poughkeepsie, NY

"Let's have a national campaign: By the end of the 1986-87 school year, every child should obtain a library card — and use it," proposed U.S. Secretary of Education William J. Bennett in his *First Lessons: A Report on Elementary Education in America*. Regina Minudri, then president of the American Library Association, accepted Bennett's challenge, and work began on the national ALA campaign: "The Best Gift You'll Ever Give Your Child," launched in October 1987.

Librarians in New York State rose to the challenge. The State Library made Federal Library Services and Construction Act Title I funds available for invitational grants to library systems. Projects (described elsewhere in this issue) were sought that would encourage family reading, particularly in families at risk, and library registration of new families and children in partnership with the "Best Gift" campaign.

In addition to the statewide grant program, individual libraries and library systems were ingenious in finding simple, direct and inexpensive ways to register more children at the library. Emphasis on registering children for library cards was integrated into ongoing programs of service. Librarians dealt with matters of procedure and tradition, long-standing barriers that have prevented children from obtaining library cards.

The Bryant Library in Roslyn rode the wake of media attention and teamed this campaign with a visit by a popular children's author. They also renewed contact with school media specialists, sent information to teachers throughout the district and talked to every class of first through sixth graders. Each class visited by the librarian received a gift paperback just right for reading aloud.

Continuing with the campaign theme, the Wayne/Ontario Library System's children's consultant contributed a letter to the Letters to the Editor column in local papers, inviting "families with preschool and school-age children to visit their library and obtain a library card NOW!"

Many public libraries in small communities within the State register patrons without issuing cards. The Marlboro Library addressed the "Best Gift" campaign this way: "Agreeing with Secretary of Education William Bennett that the best gift you'll ever give your child or yourself is a LIBRARY CARD, the Marlboro Free Library will for the first time in its history issue library cards to all patrons...."

The Westchester Library System used funds from a grant for bilingual storytelling to have the ALA "Best Gift" campaign bookmark translated into Spanish. Copies were distributed at Hispanic storytelling sessions, through adult education programs for Hispanics and through public libraries.

"Birthday Clubs" were organized by libraries in the Mid-York Library System. In a program funded by LSCA, children were sent greeting cards on their fifth birthdays that included coupons entitling then and their parents to receive a gift at their library. Librarians encouraged the children to register for a library card when they arrived at the library with their coupons.

Librarians at the Thiells Branch, King's Daughters Public Library in Haverstraw decided to make a special effort to enroll children during kindergarten. To ensure a continuation of this effort, the children's librarian will be sending displays and library card applications to the schools for future kindergarten registration days. Children applying for cards will receive special card cases and invitations to the kindergarten storyhour. Children who attend storyhour are encouraged to bring their library cards with them so they can check out books.

Perhaps the most exciting result of the "Best Gift" campaign is the dismantling of traditional restrictions to library registration for children. In June 1988, the Thiells Branch in Haverstraw removed age and grade restrictions for children registering for library cards. Mass registrations through the schools encourage those children who are not considered traditional users to come to the library. More and more children and their families are discovering "Best Gift" — the resources, the learning, the books, the pleasures available at the public library.

PARENT/CHILD WORKSHOP: MEETING THE NEEDS OF TODAY'S CHANGING FAMILIES

By Kathleen Deerr, Head,
Children's and Parents' Services Department,
Mastics-Moriches-Shirley Community Library, Shirley, NY

The last 30 years have brought massive changes in society, but few areas have been affected as dramatically as the family. The traditional family consisting of a homemaker mother, wage-earner father and two or more children is now the exception to the norm. In fact, in 1985 this traditional family accounted for less than 7 percent of all households.[1] The norm today includes: two working parents; single parent households due to desertion, divorce, never-wed mothers and death; and remarried, blended families.

An increase in family mobility brings with it a sense of isolation. Few parents are raising their children in the neighborhoods where they grew up with the support of extended family and lifelong friends and neighbors.

As part of Governor Cuomo's "Decade of the Child" program, two State studies have examined how we care and provide for our children. Despite the affluent reputation of Long Island, "some serious problems remain, especially in Suffolk."[2] The reports concluded that "while children are generally healthy and well fed, they are threatened by a long list of social problems that can be traced to the rising number of working poor and the changing family."[3]

These changing families have changing needs. Isolated from extended family and old friends, these families are seeking companionship, support and the opportunity for their young children to socialize with other children. Parents are also in need of information on child rearing, child development, early education and information on community agencies that might offer some of these services.[4]

After personally experiencing these needs when her first child was born in 1978, Sandra Feinberg, Assistant Director for Children's Services at the Middle Country Public Library, examined ways in which public libraries could meet these needs.

First, public libraries exist to meet the informational, recreational and cultural needs of a community. Children's Services had traditionally offered programs and collections for children three years of age and older. Since infants and toddlers are also part of our public, why not extend these same services and collections to children under three? Why not encourage the use of the library and reading for much younger children, directly serve the informational needs of parents and include community information and support as part of the library's role? Suffolk County libraries are local, easily accessible and professionally staffed. They provide a comfortable, nonthreatening environment for their patrons. Why not include in this environment a relaxing, comfortable, welcoming area for parents and babies? Thus, in the fall of 1979 the Parent/Child Workshop was born.

"...changing families have changing needs."

The Workshop is a unique library program for many reasons. First, unlike existing programs aimed at the children themselves (with the focus on the librarian as the performer or teacher), the Parent/Child Workshop focuses on the parent and child together. It emphasizes the parent's role as the child's first teacher and the need for parental involvement in the child's earliest learning experience and healthy mental development. Second, the environment is carefully structured to allow for a smooth, individual flow of activity rather than structuring the participants into a unified group activity. Lastly, there is the coordination of expertise from social services, health and other community agencies with library services. This provides an interdisciplinary approach to the informational needs of parents, which is the ultimate in patron service.

There are specific goals of the Workshop for parents and for children. Objectives for parents are to:

- increase parents' awareness of library services and materials
- make parents aware of community agencies and resources available for advice and support
- lessen the sense of parents' isolation
- increase parents' knowledge of their child's development, needs and capabilities
- encourage social and verbal interaction between parent and child
- support the "parents as teachers" role by stressing parent involvement in their child's early education

Objectives for children are to:

- encourage social and verbal interaction among children
- increase the child's attention span and encourage reading readiness by stressing the importance of daily parent-child interaction through:
  a. reading to their children
  b. playing with them in a stimulating way
  c. doing creative activities together[5]

STRUCTURE OF THE WORKSHOP

There are four vital components to a Parent/Child Workshop: a special room design and relaxed atmosphere; an enthusiastic staff; access to community resource professionals; and financial support for initiating and continuing the program.[6]

The workshop is 75 minutes long and conducted one day each week for five consecutive weeks. Depending on the size of the workshop room, anywhere from 15 to 30 families can be registered for each session.

The room design is a key factor in the smooth flow of interaction among various participants — parents, children, librarian, paraprofessional and resource professional. It is divided into three simultaneously functioning areas: the Resource Materials area; the Toy, Game and Reading area; the Craft area. With the exception of the Resource Materials area, all other materials are located on flat tables on the floor and there are no chairs in the room. While the program is designed for children one to three years old and parents, there are materials suitable for children ages birth to five years old to accommodate older and younger siblings.[7] This set up allows for great flexibility of time, interests and developmental stages — all crucial when you're dealing with infants and toddlers. Parents can arrive late or leave early without feeling guilty or disrupting the program, and they do not have to get a baby-sitter for other siblings. Parent and child are free to explore the various areas and activities according to their developmental interests. Lacking chairs, parents naturally sit on the floor with the children — the first step toward parent-child interaction.

"...the Parent/Child Workshop focuses on the parent and child together."

In addition to the room design, another major component is the resource professional. Each workshop series utilizes at least three outside resource people. These people are specialists in the areas of speech and language, nutrition, child development, play and movement. These professionals increase parental awareness by providing information on each specialty. They do this informally by circulating through the room and conversing with individuals or a small group of parents while the parents are playing with their children. They encourage parents to use the library and other community agencies, answer specific questions and make referrals when necessary.[8] In most cases this library contact with these professionals is the first awareness parents have of such services and the existence of the agencies.

Cooperation among librarians, resource professionals and agencies that serve children and families is mutually beneficial. The librarians become acquainted with community specialists, establish professional relationships, and get direct information about local agencies and their services. This information can then be organized and developed into an information and referral file — a vital resource for parents. Specialists can recommend books and pamphlets on their subject of expertise which would be useful additions to the library collection; librarians can provide an array of fiction and nonfiction print and nonprint materials for parents, children and professionals who work with families. Once resource specialists learn of the services, expertise and materials children's librarians have to offer, their perception of the profession changes dramatically. We are no longer the nice ladies and gentlemen who know all about children's books, tell good stories and help with homework. We are seen as peers who can provide materials and assistance for working with families. This professional relationship encourages joint development of programs, bibliographies and other services.

LIBRARIAN'S ROLE

The role of the librarian within the Workshop is multifaceted but always professional. The librarian is never a baby-sitter and rarely plays with the children and toys (except to casually demonstrate a new toy or subtly role model how to play or read with the child). The librarian's role is one of coordinator and facilitator, as well as Children's Literature, Parents' Collection and Information and Referral Specialist. In addition to this expertise, good public relations and interpersonal communications skills are also required. Unlike general reference where patrons approach a librarian with a specific need, parents often come to the Workshop so they and their children will have companionship. Once there, a skilled children's librarian meets every family individually and continues this individual contact each week. These informal

conversations (usually sitting on the floor with parents and babies) establish a comfortable rapport. The librarian makes the parents aware of the various programs, services and materials the library has to offer parents or care-givers and babies. She then elicits individual parent needs and concerns regarding child development, parenting, nutrition, speech, reading, etc. and supplies library materials and/or suggests referral services to meet these needs. This comfortable interaction is the beginning of a wonderful cycle of awareness, education and knowledge. Once patrons realize and personally experience how the library can support them as parents and they, in turn, can better provide for their babies, they become avid library users and supporters. These parents become hooked on reading, singing and playing with their babies and are constantly borrowing books, puzzles, cassettes and videos for these purposes long after the Workshop has ended.

"We are no longer the nice ladies and gentlemen who know all about children's books, tell good stories and help with homework."

Like the outside resource professionals, these parents now view the children's librarian as an information and referral expert in all areas regarding children and parenting. The result is the emergence of a whole new aspect of children's reference services. Questions parents had never thought of asking in a library are now being asked. The library and its resources have become an important part of both their life and their child's life.

In existence for almost 10 years, the demand for the program is still overwhelming. It is now offered in 19 Suffolk County libraries, one Nassau County library, the Bergenfield, New Jersey Library and various other libraries in the Ramapo-Catskill, Upper Hudson and Mohawk Valley library systems. Five branches of the Queens Borough Public Library will be offering it soon.

The success of the Parent/Child Workshop in such diverse communities for such a long period of time attests to the fact it does meet the needs of today's changing families. Library programs are often measured by how many people they attract and how many materials are circulated afterwards. The Parent/Child Workshop goes far beyond that. It lessens parents' sense of isolation by providing a nonthreatening, informal atmosphere in which they can meet and share common concerns with other parents. It provides a developmentally appropriate setting where parents take time from their hectic schedules to completely focus on interacting with their babies. Parents are made aware of services of other community agencies and receive valuable first hand information in many areas from child health and development to books and reading with infants and toddlers. Most importantly, however, the Parent/Child Workshop establishes the library as the community information and referral source and a recreational organization. It is a place with a wide range of open hours to fit into tight schedules and a place in which parents and babies feel welcome and continue to visit long after the Workshop has ended. The program is also flexible enough to be adapted to meet the needs of special populations. An example is the Teen Parent/Child Workshop at the Mastics-Moriches-Shirley Community Library, which began in 1985.

ADAPTATIONS OF THE WORKSHOP

The Teen Parent/Child Workshop is composed of pregnant and parenting teens and their children. Working in cooperation with the Teen Parent Center at the local Colonial Youth Center, the Workshop is held one evening per month at the library. The structure of the program was solid enough to make the adaptations necessary to account for the developmental stages of the teens (not just their babies) without changing the basic objectives and results. After three years of the Workshop, the teens continue to come, obtain library cards for themselves and their babies and borrow materials despite the fact that attendance is strictly voluntary.

Besides successfully meeting the needs of today's changing families and special populations, the Parent/Child Workshop is helping to change and professionalize the image and perception of the children's librarian in the eyes of other professionals, parents, other librarians and library administrators.

To obtain a copy of the *Parent/Child Workshop: A Program Handbook*, send your request to:

Kathleen Deerr
Head of Children's and Parents' Services
Mastics-Moriches-Shirley Community Library
William Floyd Parkway
Shirley, NY 11967

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COMING IN *THE BOOKMARK*

The next issue of *The Bookmark* will focus on outreach services in the libraries of New York State. The issue will be edited by Stanley Ransom, Director of the Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System. Issues now in preparation include:

Summer 1988	Outreach Services, edited by Stanley Ransom
Fall 1988	Serving Business in an Information Economy, edited by Christine Bain
Winter 1989	Libraries in the Tradition of Freedom of Information, edited by Gerald Shields

RECENT ISSUES

Spring 1988	Youth Services
Winter 1988	Libraries and Technology
Fall 1987	Bibliographic Instruction
Summer 1987	The Public Library Trustee and Changing Community Needs
Spring 1987	Conservation/Preservation
Winter 1987	The New York State Library and Libraries in New York State
Fall 1986	College and University Libraries
Summer 1986	Government Information
Spring 1986	School Libraries
Winter 1986	Institution Library Service
Fall 1985	Health Sciences Libraries
Summer 1985	Literacy and Libraries
Spring 1985	Young Adult Library Services
Winter 1985	Outreach Library Services
Fall 1984	Children's Library Service
Summer 1984	Microcomputers in Libraries
Spring 1984	The Regents and Library Service
Winter 1984	Library Service to the Aging
Fall 1983	Films and Video in Libraries
Summer 1983	Continuing Library Education
Spring 1983	New York State Agency Libraries
Winter 1983	Reference and Information Services
Fall 1982	Collection Development in Libraries
Summer 1982	Collective Bargaining in Libraries
Spring 1982	Libraries and Adult Learners
Winter 1982	Profiles of NYSILL Referral Libraries
Fall 1981	Library Service to the Disabled
Summer 1981	AACR2 and New York Libraries
Spring 1981	Small Press and Libraries
Winter 1981	Archives
Fall 1980	Children's Library Services

"WELCOME TO THE PUBLIC LIBRARY" — SERVING CHILDREN IN DAY-CARE

By Shirley Wyker, Head, Children's Services,
Onondaga County Public Library, Syracuse, NY

Introduction to the public library for very young children may occur during a family outing or with a preschool group visit. This should be a happy experience created by friendly, helpful staff in a healthy, relaxed atmosphere. By acquainting the preschoolers with resources, by cultivating their interest in the enjoyment of books, through attractive presentations, and by providing browsing opportunities we encourage future use of the library.

To foster voluntary, individual pursuit, Onondaga County Public Library Central and Branch libraries offer weekly toddler programs for two-year-olds and their parents, and preschool storytimes for children age 3 to 5. These presentations are designed to instill a love for books in young children and to develop language, literacy and learning skills.

In today's society many two-parent families and increasing numbers of single parent families work outside the home. This necessitates the placement of preschool age children in child care facilities. In Onondaga County there are 44 licensed day-care centers with 2,356 preschool age children in attendance.

During the past 12 months in the Central Library Children's Room and in the eight city branch libraries, 39 different groups from facilities serving two- to five-year-olds, scheduled 397 special programs for 7,700 children and their teachers. The children's librarians conducting these storytimes are enthusiastic and motivated to network with individual centers and pre-K classes in city schools. Their careful planning creates pleasurable experiences for the children through verbal participation exercises, fingerplays, musical activities and rhymes. Picture books featuring enjoyable characters and plots are complemented with illustrations which add visual depth and feeling. Puppets used to introduce themes and flannelgraph turn-taking games are favorite features. These devices help develop communication skills of speaking and listening in preparation for the reading and writing experiences.

Each librarian maintains a program log book which is important in reinforcing those activities that bear repeating, and ascertaining that new titles and art styles are introduced along with the traditional rhymes and tales. A significant increase in programming efforts was garnered by the Central Children's Room librarian Ernestyne Potts and her staff. In this nonresidential area, 2,492 children from centers were attracted to 109 programs during the past year.

For the teachers and care givers who remain with the children during the program, the librarians serve as role models to demonstrate how to continue to make books a joy for their groups. Follow-up readings and repeat sessions of the supplemental games will help children extend their attention span as they look and listen. Preschoolers visiting the public library regularly find the library an environment for learning and experience.

Many teachers borrow "teachers' packs," a small collection of 25 books for a six-week period, for use in the classroom as read-alouds to groups or for individual sharing. Specific subject requests to augment their study of concepts, home, community, seasons etc. are met within the range of each library's collection. Recordings, cassettes, book-cassette kits and literature-based filmstrips are borrowed on individual teachers' cards. 16mm films, available from the media and special services section, are instructional as well as entertaining.

Some centers obtain an institution card that enables them to borrow larger numbers of books for a loan period of 120 days. This system service, available through the Head of Children's Services, is requested and used regularly by eight local day-care centers and nursery schools. These teachers rely on professionals to select a variety of appropriate titles to meet interest needs and levels of comprehension.

In celebration of National Library Week and the Year of the Young Child in April, each city library became the primary choice for the display of creativity from the visiting centers' children. This cooperative involvement allowed librarians a precious opportunity to meet those parents who do not usually visit the public library but made an effort to view the exhibit and to obtain a library card.

"Who will chant the rhymes, sing the songs and share the lovely picture books with them?"

The Kits for Kids project, a LSCA grant awarded to the Onondaga County Public Library in 1984, gener-

ated the development of 100 circulating storytelling packets. Each kit contains picture books, a cassette, fingerplays, poems, a puppet or flannelgraph story pertaining to themes relevant to the interests of preschoolers. Teachers in day-care centers, nursery schools and pre-K public school classes find these kits helpful in presenting programs in their own facilities. Thirty-nine centers applied to the Central Children's Room for institution borrowers' cards that enable their teachers to borrow three kits for a three-week period. The immense popularity of these services resulted in an extension of the grant and the creation of 125 kits for kindergarten and pre-first class teachers in 1985. At the present time, 57 facilities borrow the kits, which promote varied techniques in storytelling and cultivate in young children a love for and an interest in books and reading.

Programs for care-givers are provided as frequently as they may be scheduled by our busy children's librarians. The Syracuse city schools conduct regular in-service training for their staff involved with early childhood education. OCPL's children's librarians are invited to demonstrate the use of flannelgraphs, Kits for Kids, to introduce new book titles available for use with the children and professional source materials for the adults. Similar sessions are conducted for day-care center and nursery school personnel in individual branch settings. Bibliographies are compiled to further expose children to the enjoyment of literature that will instill the desire to read.

Children's Services is pleased with the confidence placed in our materials selection, the appreciation of our programming efforts and the cooperation of care-givers in day-care centers and preschool programs. Our concern lies with those who do not benefit from our free services — the unserved children. The number is substantial. According to the latest census data projection, there are approximately 15,000 children under age five in Onondaga County who have parents working outside the home. Who will chant the rhymes, sing the songs and share the lovely picture books with them?

Through "Reading Begins At Home," a 1988 LSCA grant, we have been trying to reach the parents and care-givers in home day-care settings who are not library users. A series of programs is being videotaped for fall cable system airing. A collection of parenting books and 80 reading-fitness packs are also intended to support parenting skills and create a reading atmosphere in the home environment.

Great strides have been made in children's literature. Present day authors' and artists' efforts reflect the love and understanding necessary to help children learn to appreciate each other's similarities and differences, to encourage children to get along with the family, their peers and the community. The child is recognized as an individual of value. As librarians it is a professional joy and privilege to nurture these young minds with stories about respect to increase their own self-esteem and to help them recognize the rights of others. Through the maintenance of quality materials, services and programs, the public library must continue to support and work with others dedicated to caring for the very young. Our combined efforts to meet the needs of children during these formative years will help fulfill their hopes and dreams for a brighter future, and our hopes for lifelong library users.

Reading Begins At Home

Bears illustration created by the Pioneer Library System, Rochester, N.Y. for a joint LSCA-funded project of Livingston/Wyoming Library System and Ontario/Wayne Library System.

THE NEW YORK STATE TASK FORCE ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT: THE LIBRARY CONNECTION

By Sandra Feinberg, Assistant Director,
Middle Country Public Library, Centereach, NY

Children's services librarians have the potential for interacting with and affecting the position of children in society. The New York State Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect has recognized this by appointing a children's librarian to its coalition.

This article will define the Task Force and provide an overview of its activities; describe its current project — the Pre- and Post-natal Parent Education Hospital Program — in which librarians across the State are participating; and give a brief history of the involvement of Suffolk County children's librarians.

WHAT IS THE NEW YORK STATE TASK FORCE ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT?

Cochaired by First Lady Matilda Cuomo and the State Department of Social Services Commissioner Cesar Perales, the New York State Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect, initiated in 1983, is a statewide coalition of representatives from both the public and private sectors with a wide variety of expertise and backgrounds. Its mission is twofold: to educate the public about the problem of child abuse and neglect and to promote parenting programs as the most effective prevention strategy.

The Citizens Task Force believes that parenting is a difficult job and that all parents can benefit from access to information and support in raising children. Therefore, the Task Force's agenda has emphasized the development and support of educational materials and programs designed to enhance families' abilities to cope with problems inherent in family living.

Since 1984, the Task Force has conducted public education campaigns during April, which is Child Abuse Prevention Month, both in New York State and at the national level. Integral to these campaigns is the publication of a number of educational materials for parents and professionals. Task Force publications include *Hospital and Clinic Protocols, The Parents Survival Kit, The Family Resource Book, The Community Handbook: Enhancing Community Response to Child Abuse and Neglect* and *Welcome to Parenthood: A Family Guide.*

THE FAMILY RESOURCE BOOK

Children's librarians in Suffolk County have been involved in Task Force projects since the fall of 1985. *The Family Resource Book* — our first project — is an annotated bibliography describing books, pamphlets, curricula, and audiovisual materials available on a wide range of contemporary family life issues. Designed to meet the information needs of parents, children, community leaders, and professionals, The Family Resource Book includes a special section on children's books and a listing of selected State and national organizations that can be of assistance to families. With more than 40,000 copies distributed throughout the 50 states, it has reached a national audience and is an outstanding example of what can be achieved when librarians join efforts with educators, psychologists, social workers and community professionals on behalf of children and families.

PARENTIPS

In the April 1987 campaign, "Children Believe What Their Parents Tell Them," the Citizens Task Force alerted parents to the devastating consequences that verbal abuse has for a child's self esteem. As part of the campaign a packet of materials was sent to parents throughout the State. One item included in the packet was a special issue of *Parentips* — a bi-monthly newsletter published by the Children's Services Department of the Middle Country Public Library and edited by Mary Schumacher, a children's services librarian. This issue focused on the effects of emotional abuse on young children and contained a personal message from Matilda Cuomo and Cesar Perales as well as specially written articles from the newsletter's regular contributors: a psychologist who conducts library-based Parents Anonymous groups, a Cooperative Extension agent for human resources, and a research associate from the Children' Medical Center at SUNY, Stony Brook. The Suffolk Cooperative Library System provided the printing and paper for the statewide distribution. Again, this project allowed libraries and librarians to be an integral part of a statewide outreach project aimed at parents.

1988 CAMPAIGN

This campaign, "New York Loves Parents," is designed to promote public awareness of the idea that all parents need help and support to properly care for

their children. The message to parents is: "Be good to yourself. It is the best way to be good to your baby."

As part of the campaign, the Task Force has launched its new initiative, The Pre- and Post-natal Parent Education Hospital Program (PPPEHP). Called "PEP," this program is designed to promote hospital participation in the delivery of parent education and support services and encourage the creation of links between hospitals and community-based parenting programs.

The goal of the Pre- and Post-natal Parent Education Hospital Program is to ensure that all expectant parents and parents of newborns have access to parent education and support services. The hospital setting offers health and human services professionals a vital opportunity to teach parents about basic baby care, provide them with advice on managing life with an infant, and refer them to community-based parenting programs.

PEP has three components: 1) a survey of hospital-based parent education programs; 2) the publication and distribution of a book for parents of newborns; and 3) the compilation and publication of county listings of community-based parent education and support programs. Librarians have been involved in the production and coordination of the last two components, which include the book *Welcome to Parenthood: A Family Guide* and the county listings of programs and services.

WELCOME TO PARENTHOOD: A FAMILY GUIDE

Welcome to Parenthood: A Family Guide is a 16-page book for parents of newborns. In simple and encouraging terms, it offers parents good advice on self-care, baby care, and how to find help and support in their communities. Hannah Nuba from the Early Childhood Resource and Information Center of The New York Public Library, participated in the publication and received special acknowledgement from the committee and the guide's principal author, Donna Noyes of the N.Y.S. Council on Children and Families.

Welcome To Parenthood: A Resource Listing

COMMUNITY RESOURCE LISTINGS FOR NEW PARENTS

A crucial component of PEP is the establishment of links between hospitals and community programs for parents. The Task Force has recruited county coordinators from every county in New York State to establish a community resource listing for new parents. Through the combined efforts of Ristiina Wigg, Children's Services Consultant, Mid-Hudson Library System, Carolyn Vang, Coordinator of Youth Services, Suffolk County Library System, and me, one third of these county coordinators are children's services consultants or children's librarians.

In taking a community leadership role, these coordinators are responsible for convening committees to survey local service providers for information about parenting programs. These programs include mother-infant programs, parent resource centers, parents anonymous groups, child care and other information and referral services, postpartum groups, mommy and me programs, teen parent services and library-based parenting programs such as the Parent/Child Workshop, a library program that recognizes the library's need to serve and connect with parents, toddlers, and community resources.

In addition to compiling the list, the committee is responsible for locating a printing source. Many libraries and library systems throughout New York are providing the support to get the publication completed. For instance, in Nassau County, Nancy "Candy" Bocarde, Head of Children's Services, Merrick Library, is coordinating the project. The library staff assisted her on one of their in-house computers to get the listing print-ready. The Nassau Library System printed the publication for distribution.

Ms.Bocarde has been working with a small committee whose members are Toni Leibman, an early childhood specialist, Joanne Levine, hospital liaison, and Jean Forman, Executive Director of the Nassau Coalition on Child Abuse and Neglect and a member of the Citizen's Task Force. Their list was completed and officially presented at a May 6th hospital luncheon/press conference in coordination with the *Welcome to Parenthood: A Family Guide* booklet. Mrs. Cuomo gave the keynote address at the press conference, which was attended by hospital dignitaries, library representatives and coalition members.

Counties throughout the State are in various stages of production, working toward the finished product. The Task Force's goal is to have all the county listings completed by the fall of 1988, and in those counties that have librarians leading the project it appears to be an achievable goal. The *Welcome to Parenthood*

booklet is now being distributed to local hospitals and is ready to be collated with the resource listings. All in all, the project is progressing through the bureaucratic maze, and we look forward to seeing this booklet with its local resource listings being distributed to new parents throughout the State.

Children's services librarians are in a unique position to contribute their energies and talents to the burgeoning youth services and community coalitions organizing throughout the State. It is an opportune moment to make the library visible to other professionals working with children and their families and to provide that connecting link between parents and those community resources so needed by today's families. Their skills at organizing information, conducting viable and positive programs for families, creating nonthreatening environments for children and advocating for library services to youth are an asset to any organization or community group working for youth. This project is one example of how librarians can make that link and join hands with all people struggling to make a better world for our children. I am proud to be one of the librarians who has helped on this project.

DO YOU WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

The librarians listed below have been involved in coordinating the county committees and the resource listings.

ALBANY COUNTY: Nancy Hutchinson, Voorheesville Public Library, South Main Street, Voorheesville, NY 12186; (518) 765-2791

BROOME COUNTY: Melva Naylor, Four County Library System, Club House Road, Binghamton, NY 13903; (607) 723-8736

CHEMUNG COUNTY: Maureen Ferrell/Peg Weidemann, Steele Memorial Library System, One Library Place, Elmira, NY 14901; (607) 733-9174 or 733-9173

DUTCHESS COUNTY: Ristiina Wigg, Mid-Hudson Library System, 103 Market St., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601; (914) 471-6060

HERKIMER COUNTY: Leone Cole, Frank J. Basloe Library, 245 N. Maine St., Herkimer, NY 13350; (315) 866-1733

MADISON COUNTY: Alice Knapp, Canastota Public Library, 102 W. Center St., Canastota, NY 13032; (315) 697-7030

NASSAU COUNTY: Nancy Bocarde, Merrick Public Library, 2279 Merrick Ave., Merrick, NY 11566; (516) 379-3476

ONEIDA COUNTY: Diana Norton, Mid-York Library System, 1600 Lincoln Ave., Utica, NY 13502; (315) 735-8328

ONONDAGA COUNTY: Ernestyn Potts, Onondaga County Public Library, 5120 Muirfield Dr., Fayetteville, NY 13066; (315) 448-4690

ORANGE COUNTY: Randy Enos, Ramapo-Catskill Library System, 619 North St., Middletown, NY 10940; (914) 343-1131 or (800) 327-7343

RENSSELAER COUNTY: Janice Toomajain, Troy Public Library, 100 Second St., Troy, NY 12180; (518) 274-7170

ROCKLAND COUNTY: Patricia R. Parker, Valley Cottage Library, Route 303, Valley Cottage, NY 10989; (914) 268-7700

SCHENECTADY COUNTY: Serena Butch, Schenectady County Public Library, Liberty and Clinton St., Schenectady, NY 13205; (518) 328-3500

SUFFOLK COUNTY: Sandra Feinberg, Middle Country Public Library, 101 Eastwood Blvd., Centereach, NY 11720; (516) 585-9393

ULSTER COUNTY: Ristiina Wigg, Mid-Hudson Library System, 103 Market St., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601; (914) 471-6060

WAYNE COUNTY: Pat Stocker, Wayne County Library System, 310 Van Buren St., Newark, NY 14513; (315) 331-2176

WESTCHESTER COUNTY: Judith Rovenger, Westchester Library System, 8 Westchester Plaza, Cross Westchester Executive Park, Elmsford, NY 10523; (914) 592-8214

Samples of *The Family Resource Book* and *Welcome to Parenthood: A Family Guide* are available from: Donna Noyes, The New York State Council on Children and Families, 28th floor, Corning Tower Building, Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223.

A sample of *Parentips* is available from: Mary Schumacher, *Parentips*, Children's Services Department, Middle Country Public Library, 101 Eastwood Boulevard, Centereach, NY 11720.

THE LIBRARY SERVES HOMELESS CHILDREN

By Christine Behrmann, Yolanda Bonitch, and Harriet Gottfried,
*The New York Public Library**

The fact that there is a sizable population of homeless people in the United States is known to all. New York City, with its limited housing and rapidly rising real estate rates has an especially acute problem. Although statistics are sketchy at this point, the city's Coalition for the Homeless estimates that the population contains about 60,000 to 80,000 people; Legal Aid adds that this population contains over 5,000 families.

Being homeless in New York City does not necessarily mean being on the streets. There is a network of over 162 small church shelters and 17 city-operated shelters currently being used to provide temporary housing. These are scattered throughout Manhattan, Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens and Staten Island, and operate on various levels of organization, from those run for limited populations on a tightly structured basis to large shelters which take in undifferentiated population groups — those serving single men, single women, and undomiciled families.

The New York Public Library assumes that all people should be served, and this homeless population — transient, unorganized and under much stress — presents unique challenges to the library. The largest challenge lies in the youth, who exist in cramped quarters in a no-man's-land society — falling through cracks in social services, school services, and any of the supports routinely expected to be available to them. This includes, of course, library services. How does one make the library available to these children with no permanent address, no reliable school assignment, and no structured environment in which to read and enjoy books? For the last two years, The New York Public Library has been finding some interesting solutions to this problem.

In spring 1986, representatives from the library met with the Youth Committee of Community Board Five, which is part of a network of city advisory committees that oversee services in the city's communities. To this meeting, the board brought a specific request — could the library design a regular activity for the preschoolers in the Hotel Martinique?

The Hotel Martinique is a 17-story residence for homeless families located in midtown Manhattan, which is part of the area of responsibility of Community Board Five. Over 1,400 children make their homes there at any one time as their families wait for more permanent housing, a wait which may extend to 13 months. The board was making an effort to offer a spectrum of recreational and social services to them and asking local agencies to help. As a result of their request to The New York Public Library, the Office of Children's Services and the Office of Special Services (the arm of the Office of Programs and Services designated to do outreach with special groups) worked together to design a program to involve preschoolers with books.

"...no one, even a preteen child, was made to feel unwelcome."

Service started with a pilot program during the Summer of 1986. The ballroom of the hotel, the space alloted for programs, was provided with a small deposit collection of paperbacks which the children could borrow on an exchange basis. Children's librarians from the branches were recruited to volunteer one morning a week to do a basic picture book program (stories and fingerplay activities) with preschoolers who then had access to the deposit collection. Librarians from all over the system volunteered their services and met briefly at the hotel at the onset of the program for orientation. Then, all through the summer, pairs of children's librarians worked with librarians from the Office of Special Services at the weekly programs. All made an active effort to inform the residents of the hotel of the new program: flyers were produced, posters put up, and, on the day, the OSS staff members went from door to door, to personally invite children to the picture book time.

Attendance varied, both in quantity and type of attendee. The program was deliberately kept unrestricted as to age group so that no one, even a preteen child, was made to feel unwelcome. Some mornings, only a few children arrived; other mornings there were over 30. One interesting sidelight was that, in no case, did the people doing the door-knocking meet with any resistance from the inhabitants: all were delighted that someone was taking an interest

*Ms. Behrmann is in the Office of Children's Services, and Ms. Bonitch and Ms. Gottfired are in the Office of Speical Services.

in the children. In many cases, older brothers and sisters came along and stayed to listen.

At the end of the summer, an informal evaluation was held, and the program was declared effective, both by the library and by the board representatives, and it continued over the 1986-87 school year on a monthly basis. One of the interesting facets of the program as it continued was that the preschoolers for whom it was intended were often outnumbered by school-age children who were not attending school. On the theory that some benefit would accrue, everyone was admitted regardless of age. During this period, librarians from the branch staff continued to work with the OSS librarians, and OCS also contributed by helping to organize special programs for holiday periods. A puppet show was provided for the Easter break; a clown came at Christmas.

During 1987, deposit collections were placed at two other Manhattan shelters and a bilingual storyteller did a program at one of them. Over the summer, the weekly program was once again put into place and, once again, librarians from all over the system volunteered.

In fall 1987, a formal day-care center opened at the Martinique, and the library service evolved into a more traditional outreach service. The Office of Special Services, with the support of the Office of Children's Services, sends librarians twice a month for morning and afternoon picture book programs with the children. The deposit collection continues to be maintained and refreshed on a regular basis.

"...preschoolers for whom it was intended were often outnumbered by school-age children who were not attending school."

In the mean time, shelters in other boroughs of the city have enjoyed variations of service from The New York Public Library. On Staten Island, the Conca D'Oro Hotel had a staff member who contacted the Staten Island Borough Office requesting programming for preschoolers. A deposit collection was set up and staff from the borough office and from the St. George Library Center did programming there on a regular basis. In the Bronx, the Prospect Interfaith Family Inn asked the library to help set up a permanent library, specifically requesting a toddler program (for children from six months to two and one-half years.) Such a program was done and was quite successful; more are planned.

As the work with hotel children moves towards the conclusion of its second year, it is most solidly implanted at the Hotel Martinique, where programming continues on a regular basis, backed up by the deposit collection. Other shelters in Manhattan continue to receive paperbacks for their deposit collections. On Staten Island, the program is temporarily inactive, as the shelter staff who supported it are no longer at the Conca D'Oro. The Borough Office maintains contact with the hotel and will continue programming when there is support for it. The Bronx program is relatively new, but the Bronx Borough Office feels that it is promising, especially in the area of work with toddlers.

During the period under discussion, eight shelters were served; 50 programs done, with a total attendance of 979 children. 2,400 paperbacks have gone into deposit collections.

When these statistics are compared with those with which this discussion began, it is obvious that many children are not being served. The two major barriers to this service are system-wide library staff shortages, which make it difficult for librarians to serve their regular populations, much less reach out to work with additional groups; and uneven cooperation from the staff at the shelters. As is shown at the Martinique, service can be successful and extensive with support from the officials running the shelter. As is demonstrated at the Conca D'Oro, without this cooperation, the program cannot exist.

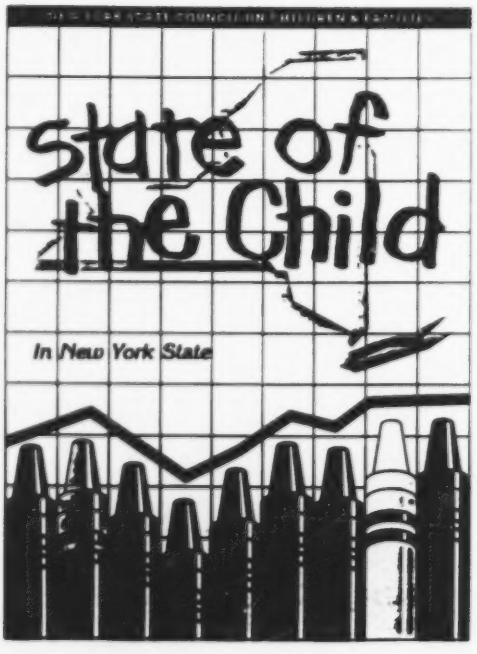
When these barriers are overcome, work with hotel preschoolers by the library has been perceived, without exception, as a success by the people being served and by the staff working with them. The library's commitment to this transient population is an important demonstration to them and to the library's staff of its dedication to serve all the city's citizens. More importantly, it is a person-to-person contact between people who want to give library service and people who really need it. This program is thus the essence of what public library service is about. As such, it is a rededication for all who have gone to the hotels, bringing books, information, and a firm desire to make these available to everyone, everywhere.

THE DECADE OF THE CHILD

By Donna Miller, New York State Council on Children and Families, and Alexandria Douglas, New York State Department of Social Services

In his 1988 State of the State address, Governor Cuomo declared the next 10 years in New York State to be the Decade of the Child. The Governor noted that New York's children are in danger — threatened by poverty, inadequate education, and physical and mental abuse. The total number of poor children has been increasing; at present, one out of every four children in New York State is living in poverty. According to 1980 census data, that means four out of every ten black children, five out of every ten Hispanic children and one out of every ten white children are living in poverty in this State. Black and Hispanic children are over-represented in the foster-care system. They are also at greater risk of infant mortality, of dropping out of school, of becoming homeless, and of living in communities in which street violence and crime are common occurrences.

In response to the Governor's declaration, State-level agencies working on behalf of children considered ways in which to assist in identifying the problems facing children in New York, and in developing a plan to address these problems over the next ten years. This article will describe actions taken by the New York State Council on Children and Families and the New York State Department of Social Services.



STATE OF THE CHILD IN NEW YORK STATE

For the New York State Council on Children and Families, an important step in meeting the Governor's challenge was the publication of *State of the Child in New York State* (1988). This groundbreaking report presents, for the first time, a comprehensive and uniform collection of data on the social, demographic, health, educational and legal characteristics of New York State's children and their families. By providing an objective statistical description, the report helps decision makers identify which problems are the most severe and which groups of children are at greatest risk.

To build on the information provided by the *State of the Child* report, a plenary group of experts in the field of children and family issues was convened to assist in planning a series of Community Roundtables on Children and Families. The series was designed to involve local communities in identifying the most pressing issues, setting priorities, and developing an agenda to improve the status of children and families during the Decade of the Child and beyond.

Between September 1988 and January 1989 Roundtables were held in cooperation with local United Way agencies in ten diverse communities across New York State. Public and private community leaders, service providers and advocates met to propose State and local actions to address urgent issues concerning children and families. Roundtables varied in size, content and approach, but each created an opportunity to address the planning and policy-development needs of the Decade of the Child from the unique perspective of local communities. These communities were encouraged to develop plans to improve local responses to the needs of children and their families.

The Council on Children and Families has developed materials that highlight critical issues and summarize the suggested actions generated by the Community Roundtables. During January 1989 representatives from the Community Roundtables met with experts and advocates to review the materials and to discuss the common themes that emerged from the Roundtable process. The discussion was integrated with a review of other major activities related to the Decade of the Child, such as the State's Interagency Task Force on Children and Youth and the No Time to Lose initiative sponsored by the New York

State Department of Social Services (NYSDSS).

NO TIME TO LOSE!

In 1987, Governor Cuomo and Social Services Commissioner Cesar A. Perales convened a conference to address the issues facing black and Hispanic children and their families in inner-city communities of New York State. The conference recommendations produced a call for a ten-year commitment by public, private and voluntary sector leaders to rebuild inner-city communities as part of a commitment to strengthening families and improving the life chances of children.

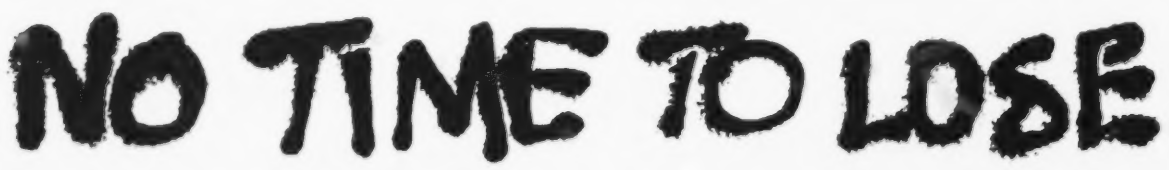
To stimulate public awareness and involvement in responding to the needs of children, the Department of Social Services produced a video documentary, "No Time to Lose!" In the video, a group of inner-city children vividly describe their lives, hopes and dreams. The message is powerful; and the Department of Social Services is making a concerted effort to ensure that the children's stories will be heard and understood by people all over the State.

Understanding the daily concerns of children at risk is not enough. The New York State Department of Social Services has produced a Leader's Guide for use in motivating people to make a personal pledge to develop projects or programs that will address issues facing these children. The "No Time to Lose!" video and the Leader's Guide are available to individuals, agencies, community groups, churches, synagogues, businesses, unions and libraries. The staff at the Division for Library Development recently discussed the following ideas for library participation in Decade of the Child/No Time to Lose! programs in communities across the State:

Preschool/early childhood programs
Programs in shelters and hotels for the homeless
Storyhours/volunteer librarians
Job information centers
Parenting skills workshops — for parents and caregivers
Community information/resource centers
After-school homework hotline
Safe, quiet places to do homework
Link up with community groups to bring children into libraries
Set up programs in which older children help younger children with their homework
Bring more minorities into the library field
Bilingual services
Volunteers from the community to bring in minority/bilingual presences to act as role models
Develop paraprofessional jobs for community residents who are role models for the children
Develop work/study programs for children to work as paid staff (in school libraries also) or for community service credit
Work with Boy/Girl Scouts career education programs to promote librarianship as a career
Link up with the county government agencies; need to promote more utilization of libraries
Use lay boards as a vehicle to bring community residents into advisory roles and outreach programs for libraries
Provide a safe way for children to get to and from libraries (link with community groups)
"Ram Van" models that provide books, videos, movies, storyhours, etc. to inner-city children
Bookmobile-style van services that include art/city-museum exhibits.

By joining with other groups in support of the Decade of the Child, libraries in each community have the opportunity to strengthen existing services to children, to publicize those services and to develop new services providing children at risk with the knowledge they need for improving their lives. For more information about how your library might become involved in the *No Time to Lose! Blueprint For Action*, please contact the *No Time to Lose!* office at (518) 473-7590.

> I am proud of the progress we have achieved in New York State in helping children and families to attain independence and self-sufficiency. Historically, we have been in the forefront of providing the best possible response to the needs of children and their families. As demonstrated by the problems and challenges presented...we must ensure, more than ever before, that children have the supports and services they need to meet the challenges of the future.
>
> — Mario Cuomo, Introductory letter to *State of the Child in New York State*



HOW SCHOOL LIBRARY SYSTEMS CAME TO BE AND WHERE ARE THEY TODAY?*

By Joseph F. Shubert, State Librarian and Assistant Commissioner for Libraries, New York State Education Department

I think it is important for us to look at the titles of the talks which open and close this conference. Mine, as you know, is "How the School Library Systems Came to Be...," and the title for the closing presentation tomorrow is "The Turning Point." The significance lies in what is about to take place over the next 26 hours in which we — Department staff, system directors, chairs and members of the school library system councils, other school and BOCES administrators, and SUNY Rockefeller staff — work together in examining the role, responsibility, and development of the Council and the system director.

"...school library systems as part of a statewide network of all libraries."

We know that New York is unique in the nation in the development of school library systems as part of a statewide network of all libraries. By design, we have not taken the routes of Illinois, Pennsylvania, or Colorado. As a result, we face different sets of problems than do school library networkers in those states — and have different advantages. Our systems are also unique in their organization and operation within BOCES and the big cities. And that fact produces certain consequences; the consequences of both aspects of uniqueness are the reason for this conference.

Let's go back 10 years and look at the first *Fact Book on the Regents Legislative Program for Libraries* (1978). It said "school library media resources and services are needed by the 4.1 million children in New York schools, but they are unevenly available. School libraries for the most part have not had the opportunity to share resources through systems...BOCES offer a means for sharing both print and nonprint resources." The *Fact Book* went on to propose legislation to provide planning and operating funds for school library systems.

Like many other good ideas presented as part of a package, the Legislature adopted and expanded this proposal and at the same time reduced the total appropriation for a comprehensive program by two thirds. It is important to remember, of course, that this new program was proposed less than three years after Governor Carey's "wine and roses" speech — a time when funds for new initiatives were still remarkably limited. This is why we had pilot school library system projects authorized for a period of three years (and subsequently extended twice until permanent school library systems were authorized in 1984).

PILOT PROJECTS

The pilot projects proved valuable — first in demonstrating the effectiveness of school library resource sharing and, second, in showing us both the strengths and weaknesses of the systems as tested in the pilot phase. Let's think for a few minutes of what we demonstrated and learned from the pilot projects:

- Schools have something to share: many librarians were genuinely surprised to learn that as many as 85 percent of interlibrary loans within a system could be filled by other school libraries.
- School library systems are not a drain on other library systems: they can take their place along with the public library systems and reference and research library systems and operate effectively as part of the statewide network.
- Systems which were part of the regional pilot networks — or which joined the 3Rs — had easier access to resources beyond the schools.
- Some advisory councils were more effective than others.
- The role of the librarian responsible for the system is key, and the system needs to be headed by a librarian with sufficient status and resources to do an effective job.
- The BOCES and big city districts were an effective host for the pilot systems and provided important in-kind support.
- By and large, fears that school administrators would cut back on building-level library support once system resources and services were available proved unfounded.

*Remarks to the School Library Systems Conference, December 1, 1987, Albany.

- Pilot systems which used standard cataloging software had the greatest success in producing union catalogs.

It is not important to go into greater detail on the findings and observations of the pilot projects — although there were other important findings. These are enough to provide background on why the law and regulations say what they do about school library systems, councils and directors (coordinators).

It is important to take time to point out that the 1981 Commissioner's Committee on Statewide Library Development looked at the early results of the pilot projects and made recommendations for future development. Following up on this, a task force prepared a discussion paper with specific recommendations for school library system functions, size, membership, governance, and funding.

1984 REGULATIONS

These experiences and decisions stemming from these discussions were particularly useful in 1983 as the first permanent school library system bill was being drafted, and again when regulations were prepared after the legislation was enacted in July 1984.

Some of you remember the controversies over draft regulations, extending well into 1985. Much of that controversy related to questions of system membership, qualifications of the coordinator (now director), the member plan, and requirements for system services. I do not recall that provisions for the Council were the subject of much argument at that point.

Let's step back for a minute to the critical decisions that were made in the 1984 regulations, and the thinking behind them. The new school library systems (and all became new at that point, the 12 pilot projects had to meet the same requirements as all the others) were to have several significant characteristics:

- A solid base in both law and regulations
- An identity as library systems — different from the ordinary BOCES or city district service, and part of the statewide network of libraries and library systems
- Direction by a librarian who would be seen to have the administrative and planning responsibilities needed if systems were to be a success and if they were to be equals with the other types of library systems
- Important, ongoing responsibilities for the plan of service, the annual budget, and evaluation of the system.

For these reasons the School Library System Council is different from the usual BOCES or district advisory committee.

POWERS OF COUNCIL AND DIRECTORS

But what powers do the Council and the director have? Doesn't the BOCES superintendent and the BOCES administration "call the shots"? After all, the Council doesn't appoint the director, neither the director nor the Council writes checks for system operations, and the budget forms are signed by the superintendent or his or her designee.

At the September meeting with school library system directors, I sensed the strong frustration that directors and some Council members have with the governance structure currently established in law and regulation. This conference is designed to help break through some of that frustration, to provide you with some of the tools needed to work within this structure, and to enable you to work with us in strengthening the systems, enabling the systems to work with maximum effectiveness within the statewide network.

This is not a conference to plan changes in governance or structure — as you know King Research Associates has begun the study of library systems and services which is designed to tell us what changes are needed. Your participation in that study is important. This conference deals with how we can work with what we have.

And what is it that we have? I think we have five things:

First, a terribly important undertaking and responsibility. We are making fundamental change in the way school libraries operate by providing a means of resource sharing among districts within the system — and through the system to share the total resources of the State and nation. The Governor and the Commissioner have made clear that our schools must change. If boys and girls in our schools are to learn, and to become lifelong learners, they need school libraries supported by systems. Our work is even more important today than it was in 1984 when the Legislature authorized the systems.

Second, a corps of librarians, school library system directors, council members, school administrators, and others who want to make the systems work. This corps, incidentally, includes many public and academic librarians who have a strong interest in having better schools and school libraries.

Third, some of the resources we need — funds for system operation, increasing strength of librarians at the building-level, the promise of technology — not always in the degree to which we need them, but certainly they are there.

Fourth, a spirit of change in the way we Americans

live today, in the way we relate to authority, to children, to our jobs — and an acknowledgement that the changing demographics of our State demand a change in schools, school libraries, and libraries of all kinds. The spirit of change, I think, also requires us to understand that in today's society not all things are clear cut, or black and white. Increasingly we need to learn how to live with ambiguity, and ambiguity has positive as well as negative aspects.

Fifth, a bureaucracy that can test our wills, our skills, our persistence, and our assertiveness.

PROGRESS TOWARD SUCCESS

Russian and American bureaucracies are famous, and their complexity and rigidity is not necessarily linked to size. You and I face bureaucratic problems each day in many situations. Part of the satisfaction of our jobs comes from the elation we feel when we have worked our way through a situation that intimidates others. Our conference staff from Rockefeller College can help us generalize and get perspective on our problems through the organization model they have developed. In the plainest of language, they are going to show us that there is "more than one way to get from here to there."

"People who assume they are powerless, are powerless...."

Several times over the last three years I have spoken about "empowering" system directors and librarians. Perhaps that isn't the correct word because my collegiate dictionary says persons are empowered because they are "given official authority or legal power." I think that is only part of it — people must also empower themselves through creative use of the authority and the responsibility they are given in law and regulation.

The pilot projects showed important differences among the advisory councils and the effectiveness of each. It is clear today that there are significant differences among the School Library System Councils. Some have taken the time to develop bylaws, Council operating policies, and Council objectives (separate from the objectives of the system). Some have not.

Our regulations require both a system council and the designation of liaison persons (or communications coordinators). There is a fundamental distinction in roles of each: some councils and directors recognize this distinction, others do not.

Some councils have been more successful than others in influencing planning, decisions, and services. Some have successfully assumed a major role in making policy for their system and in regional cooperation. As in many other situations, the council, its functioning, and its accomplishments in many ways reflects the way in which council members see themselves — and the way the director sees the council. People who assume they are powerless, are powerless; people who assume the power they need to carry out their responsibility succeed.

"...people who assume the power they need to carry out their responsibility succeed."

Role, responsibility, empowerment — that is what this conference is about — and why it can prove to be a turning point for school library systems.

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EXERCISING POWER: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUNCIL, THE DIRECTOR, AND LIAISON

Education Law and Commissioner's Regulations provide a basis for specific actions by the **Council**, the **Director** and the **Liaison** in a school library system. Chapter 282 of *Education Law* provides for the establishment of the systems and Chapter 283 outlines the functions of the Systems. Section 90.18 of *Commissioner's Regulations* deal with school library systems. Excerpts from the regulations are quoted below.

THE COUNCIL

90.18 (b). *Governance.* (1) The Board of cooperative educational services or the board of education of education of the city school district shall be the governing board of the school library system. In the case of a school library system serving a combination of BOCES and/or city school district, one BOCES or city school district shall be designated as the official administrative agency. Each such boards shall appoint members to the first school library system **council**, including nonpublic school representatives, shall act as fiscal agent, and shall submit the plan of service to the commissioner for his approval. (2) School Library System **Council**.

(i) Each school library system shall have a school library system **council**, which shall meet at least four times a year. Such school library system **council** shall be composed of at least nine members, and shall include representatives of the members in the school library system and of the public library systems and the reference and research library resources systems in the region. The plan of service shall specify the method of appointment of the school library system council, provided that the first **council** shall be appointed as set forth in paragraph (1) of this subdivision. The school library system **council** members shall serve three-year terms, provided that first members of each school library system **council** shall be

THE DIRECTOR (COORDINATOR)

90.18 (a) *Definitions.*

...

(7) **Coordinator** of a school library system means a certified school librarian with a minimum of three years employment as a school librarian and, for those serving as such a **coordinator** after July 1, 1987, possessing a school administrator and supervisor certificate in accordance with section 80.4(b) of this Chapter.

90.18 (d). *System Staffing.* Each school library system shall employ a full time **coordinator** of the school library system. School library systems, or combinations thereof, with the enrollment of 200,000 students or more, shall employ at least an additional .5 full time equivalent certified school librarian for each additional 100,000 students, or major fraction thereof, to assist the coordinator in designated school library system activities. At least 50 percent of such staff shall be employed in the first year. At leaset one full-time clerical staff member shall be assigned to each coordinator. Other professional and support staff members shall be employed as necessary to execute school library system functions. The adequacy of the staff in relation to the plan of service activities shall be determined by the commissioner.

THE COUNCIL (continued)

appointed for terms of from one to three years so that, as nearly as possible, one-third of the members of the **council** shall thereafter be appointed each year. A vacancy on the school library system **council** shall be filled by the governing board for the duration of the term of the individual whose seat on the **council** is to be filled. Members shall serve without compensation.

(ii) The governing board and the **council** shall be responsible for development of the plan of service. Upon approval by the **council**, the governing board shall submit the plan to the commissioner for approval. After approval by the commissioner, it shall be the responsibility of the governing board and the **council** to monitor the implementation of the plan of service.

(c) *Plan of Service.* (1) Content. A BOCES or board of education of an eligible city school district or combination of BOCES and/or eligible city school districts seeking funding as a school library system shall submit to the commissioner a plan of service approved by the school library system **council** in the form prescribed by him. The plan shall include, but not be limited to:

. . .

(ii) statement of policies and procedures to be used for selection of the school library system **council** members, indicating how such policies and procedures assure that the **council** is broadly representative of the providers and users of library services;

. . .

90.18 (e). *Functions of the system coordinator.* The school library system coordinator will be responsible for the following aspects of the school library system, including but not limited to:

. . .

(5) communications with the district liaisons or, in the city school district of New York, the communications coordinators, with the school library system **council**, and with other school or community personnel or agencies;

. . .

(7) planning periodic meetings of the school library system **council** and district liaison personnel;

. . .

(13) preparing annually a budget on forms prescribed by the commissioner to be submitted to the school library system **council** and governing board which shall approve and file such budget with the department no later than April 30 of each year.

THE DIRECTOR (COORDINATOR) (continued)

90.18 (e). *Functions of the system* ***coordinator***. The school library system **coordinator** will be responsible for the following aspects of the school library system, including, but not limited to:

(1) creation of a union catalog in appropriate format;

(2) establishment of interlibrary loan procedures, including delivery and policy;

(3) development of a cooperative collection development plan;

(4) planning of professional staff development and other continuing education activities;

(5) communications with the district liaisons or, in the city school district of New York, the communications **coordinators**, with the school library system council, and with other school or community personnel or agencies;

(6) development of a specialized collection of selection and verification tools for use by system members;

(7) planning periodic meetings of the school library system council and district liaison personnel;

(8) serving as advisor to member libraries and districts on program development and improvement and assisting with development and updating of members' plans developed pursuant to paragraph (4) of subdivision (f) of this section;

(9) serving as liaison to appropriate State Education Department offices concerning system and member needs and other matters;

(10) development of cooperative activities with other school library systems, public library systems and the reference and research library resources system;

(11) conducting periodic visits to members and participants;

(12) planning and conducting procedures for data gathering and reporting; and

(13) preparing annually a budget on forms prescribed by the commissioner to be submitted to the school library system council and governing board which shall approve and file such budget with the department no later than April 30 of each year.

THE COUNCIL (continued)

90.18 (f). *Membership*. Each participant in a school district shall have procedures related to participation in the school library system plan as recommended by the school library system **council**.

90.18 (h). *Reports*. Each school library system shall transmit to the department annually, by September 15, a report for the year ending the previous June 30, in such form as shall be prescribed by the commissioner, and such other progress reports as may be required by the commissioner. Such annual report shall include the evaluation of the school library system **council** with respect to the effectiveness of the implementation of the plan of service.

THE LIAISON (AND COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR)

90.18 (c). *Plan of Service*. (1) Content. A BOCES or board of education of an eligible city school district or combination of BOCES and/or eligible city school districts seeking funding as a school library system shall submit to the commissioner a plan of service approved by the school library system council in the form prescribed by him. The plan shall include, but not be limited to:

. . .

(xv) a description of the responsibilities of district **liaisons** and, in city school district systems, of the communication coordinators.

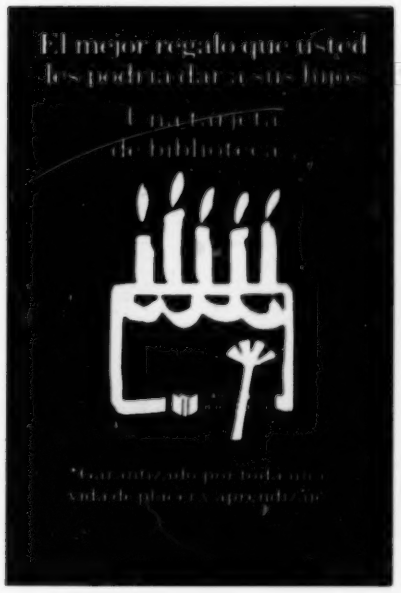
90.18 (e). *Functions of the system coordinator*. The school library system coordinator will be responsible for the following aspects of the school library system, including, but not limited to:

. . .

(5) communications with the district liaisons or, in the city school district of New York, the communications coordinators, with the school library system council, and with other school or community personnel or agencies;

90.18 (f). *Membership*. (1) All school districts and nonpublic schools located within a BOCES supervisory district which has established a school library system shall be eligible for membership in such school library system, provided that each such member shall designate a certified school librarian as the **liaison** to the school library system. The **liaison** shall implement the procedures to be followed in the district, within the general guidelines and procedures determined by the school library system, regarding data collection for union lists, cooperative collection development, other system requirements, intra-district and inter-district loan requests, and necessary reports. The **liaison** shall keep other librarians and staff of the members informed of school library system policies, procedures, activities, and services. Time to perform **liaison** duties shall be provided by the member. The **liaison** shall have access to an outside telephone line and photoduplication facilities.

(2) In the city school district of the city of New York, each community school district and borough assistant superintendent for high schools, and the division of special education shall designate a licensed teacher of library as **communications coordinator** to assist in **liaison** between the school library system staff and the libraries in the district. Within school library systems established by the city school districts of Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Yonkers, a certified school librarian shall be designated as liaison to the school library system from each zone, representative area, or other internal subdivision of the city school district used for school organization. Nonpublic school members shall designate a representative to serve as **liaison** between such nonpublic school members and the school library system.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